

U.S. Southeast Regional Partner Request for Proposals

1. NOVO FOUNDATION: BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The NoVo Foundation is dedicated to building a more just and balanced world. Since 2006, we have worked to catalyze a transformation from a world of domination and exploitation to one of collaboration and partnership. Together with our partners, we work at the intersections of patriarchy, racism, and other forms of oppression that stand in the way of girls living in their full power and achieving their potential.

NoVo has become one of the largest private foundations in the world to support initiatives focused explicitly on girls and women—with a focus on advancing adolescent girls’ rights and ending violence against girls and women. It also works to advance social and emotional learning, support Indigenous communities in North America, and promote local living economies. Across all of its work, the NoVo Foundation supports the development of capacities in people - individually and collectively - to help create a world based on mutual respect, collaboration, and love.

The NoVo Foundation has always included a strong focus on adolescent girls, going back to our inception in 2006. As a social justice foundation with a deep commitment to addressing the structural barriers that perpetuate inequality, it was absolutely clear from the beginning that we needed to focus on girls.

NoVo is committed to working towards a world where all girls are safe and free.

2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO STRENGTHEN MOVEMENTS FOR GIRLS OF COLOR

In 2016, we launched a learning process to deepen our grantmaking in support of the movement for girls of color in the U.S. After speaking to more than 300 girls of color as well as activists of all ages, we have designed a grantmaking strategy aimed to strengthen the movements for girls of color in the U.S. Below, we outline the grantmaking priorities that emerged from our year-long learning process.

Who the work will support: Adolescent girls of color

In the U.S., NoVo Foundation focuses on adolescent girls of color because of the structural barriers they face as a result of deep-seated racism and sexism in this country. We also recognize that girls of color have particular vulnerabilities because of their age; and yet they also hold immense power to drive transformation. At the same time, girls of color are often invisible across funding priorities, efforts to address policy change, and in systems and programming. We believe that investing in building the power of girls and responding to their vulnerabilities is critical to creating meaningful change with and for them, their communities, and this country.

When we use the term “of color,” we recognize that there is not a consistent definition across all communities. Our practice is to trust partners leading the work to identify

language that is honoring and inclusive. Through this initiative we will support organizations, activists, and collectives who self-identify as “of color” and face racism, sexism, and other intersectional structural barriers.

NoVo focuses on cis and trans adolescent girls of color and gender non-conforming youth who experience gender-based structural oppression. We recognize that trans girls and gender non-conforming youth can have needs that both overlap with those of cis girls and those which are unique, and we will work to identify opportunities and support movements that center their specific power and vulnerability.

We will prioritize support for partners that reach and center girls who are the hardest to reach, who are too often made to be invisible, marginalized, and targeted.

What the work looks like: Strengthen movements that build power with and for girls of color

NoVo works alongside partners to strengthen movements that build power with and for girls of color. We define this power as a true democratic power, providing the basis for all girls and their communities to participate in the decisions that shape their lives

In building a vision for this work with partners across the country, we seek to create a world where all girls **can live in peace** and free from all forms of violence, **dream and imagine** all the possibilities for their future, **access all that’s necessary** to live in dignity and fulfill their dreams, and **feel celebrated** through love and connection.

Based on what we learned from partners about the critical work necessary to **achieve this vision, we will support movement-building efforts with and for girls that include:**

1) Direct work with girls of color at the local and grassroots level that creates space for connection and healing and/or spaces for consciousness raising and where their leadership is supported;

and/or

2) Work that responds to the structural harms and systemic barriers girls of color face through organizing, advocacy, base-building, and narrative-shaping efforts that are national and local in scope.

Though we are not focused on specific sectors or issues areas, during our listening sessions we identified a number of key areas to support because of their critical importance in the lives of girls of color and the lack of investment by philanthropy:

- **Ending Sexual Violence:** Support survivors and advocates in their efforts to build and strengthen movements working to shift culture, raise visibility and advocate for survivors, and end violence against girls.
- **Ending Anti-Black Racism:** Partner with activists and organizations working to dismantle anti-black racism and the racialized and gendered impact it has in the

lives of girls as a part of a larger struggle to dismantle patriarchy and white supremacy.

- **Building Solidarity Across Communities:** Identify opportunities to support efforts that intentionally build solidarity across communities through healing, relationship building, and visioning.
- **Supporting Intergenerational Leadership:** Support opportunities for community building, visioning, and healing across generations of girls and women of color.
- **Resourcing and Supporting Girl-Driven Ideas and Projects:** Provide opportunities to support the brilliant ideas girls of color have now.

3. A STRATEGY FOR REGIONAL MOVEMENT-BUILDING

Why regional movement building

As a core value, NoVo deeply respects lived experience. We center the leadership of people who live every day with injustice because they are the single most powerful agents of transformative change. We believe that the best solutions to community challenges come from the people within those communities, and we support social movements that build the power of people to create lasting change.

Our strategic priority to develop regional partnerships is an exciting opportunity to invest in local leadership and to significantly invest additional philanthropic resources in parts of the country often neglected. The opportunity to convene, vision, and strategize across state lines in a region is a critical movement-building strategy. Historically, social movements have often relied on organizing across communities to build democratic power, strengthen alliances, and base build.

To begin supporting regional work, we will focus on a region that's been largely ignored by philanthropy but has a deep and strong social justice movement history and capacity: the U.S. Southeast.

Why the Southeast?

The Southeast has been neglected by philanthropy, especially when it comes to the work of supporting girls, activists, and community-based organizations advocating on behalf of girls of color. Even though 40 percent of girls of color live in the South,¹ just 5.4 percent of all foundation funding in the South went to programs focused on women and girls, and less than 1 percent went to programs focused on Black women and girls.² Moreover, the region's history of oppression is still evident today, particularly in the forms of oppression faced by girls of color and black girls specifically.

Despite being neglected by philanthropy, the Southeast doesn't lack leadership or a progressive infrastructure. It has a vibrant history of organizing and movement-building,

¹Williams-Baron, Emma and Shaw, Elyse. *Girls and Young Women of Color: Where They Are in the United States*. 2016

² Mason, Nicole. *Unequal Lives: State of Black Women & Families in the Rural South*. Southern Black Women's Initiative. 2012.

from abolition to civil rights to suffrage and other movements that have had a meaningful impact on the trajectory of this country. There is both tremendous need and tremendous opportunity for increased funding in this region for efforts that center and support girls of color.

Therefore, we want to support local and regional thought leadership, advocates, and activists for philanthropic and grantmaking leadership. Our hope is to build on the existing strength and wisdom that exists in the Southeast. We will begin in the Southeast because the leadership and movements demand increased philanthropic partnership, the leadership and capacity exists, and this region will always be critical in leading the U.S. forward towards justice and equity.

Guided by input from our partners, we are focusing on the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. We know that defining regions is complicated and changes b/c of many reasons, our goal is to work with local leaders to do what makes most sense for the movement building needs of the Southeast.

Our Opportunity to Support a Regional Infrastructure for Grantmaking and Movement Building

NoVo is committed to working in collaboration with regional partners throughout the process to design, implementation, and execution phases of our grantmaking. We recognize this might not all come from one partner and therefore encourage partnerships of individuals and institutions to be able to deliver this level of regional support.

By early 2018, we will identify partner(s) to co-create a regional infrastructure for grantmaking and movement building to support the movement for girls of color. This initial support will be a one-year planning grant. Following the planning year, the partner's primary function is to build and strengthen the movements that center girls of color in their respective regions through grantmaking.

The regional partner will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Grantmaking to locally based organizations that are implementing work with and for girls of color as defined in the aforementioned priorities;
- Grantmaking to seed organizations that are starting new work and/or formalizing work with and for girls of color as defined in the aforementioned priorities;
- Developing a structure for funding people who work outside of c3 structures and/or designing the best strategies to directly fund work happening with and for girls of color outside of the traditional c3 structure;
- In addition to administering financial resources, coordinating efforts that provide spaces for healing, continued political education, and organizing capacity building. We will rely on the regional intermediary to define what this looks like

in local context and develop a strategy to implement it within the grantmaking infrastructure.

Proposal Requirements & Templates

Through this open RFP process, we invite organizations or teams based in any of the 12 states representing the Southeast to submit proposals. We are looking for partners that are well placed to work on *movement building, grantmaking and capacity building*. We are open to proposals from organizations not yet formed as well as collectives that have the capacities to design and implement the scope of work. We also will prioritize the leadership of women of color in prospective partners.

Invited organizations to answer the following six questions:

- Please describe your organization/team and the values that guide the culture of your organization.
- Describe the structural injustices (historical and current) specific to communities of color in the Southeast, and how girls of color are uniquely shaped by these political, social, and economic realities.
- Describe your experience building and/or strengthening movements working at the intersections of racial and gender justice in your region. Tell us about how girls of color were centered in your movement-building experiences.
- Please share any experiences you may have working across states within your region to support advocates, organizers, and/or local partners.
- Describe your experience and approach as an intermediary to identifying, selecting, and supporting local and community-based grantee partners; if you do not have grantmaking experience, share with us any relevant experience that shows you have the capacity to manage this effort.
- Describe your experience and/or proposed *approach* for convening local partners in an effort to advance opportunities for relationship building, collective visioning, and capacity building. If you have not done this in your work, please describe how you would approach it as a regional partner.
- If applicable, please share any experience your organization has with one or more of our ***priorities for strengthening movements*** (see above) and how they might be reflected in your role as a regional partner.

C. Organization Financial Information

- Organization's Annual Budget (*previous two years and current year*):
- In 2015: \$

- In 2016: \$
- Proposed 2017: \$

Organizations are asked to submit an initial approximate budget for one planning year.

Please submit your response to this RFP by June 15, 2017 to rfp@novofoundation.org.

Note: We will host a call on two different dates to respond to any questions people have about the RFP and process. The dates of the webinar are below. If you plan to attend, please rsvp to rfp@novofoundation.org with the date and any questions you have in advance.

Date 1: Tuesday, May 2 at 1:00 EST

Date 2: Tuesday, May 9 at 2:00 EST

Please build in flexibility and time for revisions within the overall RFP timeline.

Correction: A previous version of this form incorrectly listed girlsrfp@novofoundation.org as the contact email above. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.