

Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy
Fundraising/Pitch Video: “The Flower Wheel” Transcript

Sammy Moon:

Over a year ago, we launched the Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy, an innovative business model focused on achieving results by building organizational and leadership capacity and breaking down the power and privilege dynamic that has historically separated philanthropy from nonprofits.

Our theory of change is based on the simple idea that philanthropy and nonprofits are fundamentally in the same business of creating positive impact for children, families, and communities. But, in effect, they historically have worked as two sides of the same coin in a transactional relationship with little meaningful strategic communication and interaction.

Our Alliance work takes place along the edge of the coin which is where the two sides—nonprofits and philanthropy—come together. It’s where the power and privilege dynamic can be broken down; where trust is built; where collaboration happens; and where the transactional relationship is minimalized.

We are the only statewide entity in the nation that has implemented this integrated business model based on collaboration that emphasizes mutual learning, sharing, and strategy development.

Our direction for the future builds on the work we have done thus far and it provides an opportunity for you to invest in a model that we believe will benefit not only children, families, and communities in Mississippi but the field at large.

Our belief in the importance of collaboration between nonprofits and philanthropy is foundational to our work. We also believe that we have to lead by example, developing deep relationships with organizations that bring significant value to Alliance members and, thereby, help us drive innovation in Mississippi.

We have thriving partnerships with well-known and highly regarded national organizations like Candid, Network for Good, and DataBank. These organizations offer services and support that help members of The Alliance make decisions based on data and best practices.

Our work with state colleges, universities, and government agencies has led to the development of advanced training opportunities for nonprofits and far-reaching programs that are having great impact in communities throughout the state.

Through our relationships with Millsaps College, the University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State University, and the University of Mississippi, we are able to provide nonprofit and philanthropic professionals with educational programs that meet the needs of the changing philanthropic and nonprofit landscape.

Our success with the statewide Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is due in large part to our work with the Mississippi Department of Education, and we have multiple efforts being

developed through an innovative partnership with Volunteer Mississippi, including eight decentralized regional hubs for volunteers and nonprofits, ensuring more focus on local communities.

Other organizations, such as the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Children's Foundation of Mississippi, the Barksdale Reading Institute, and the Social Science Research Center, account for the other partnerships we are cultivating – those with nonprofit entities that we work with to address specific issues and conduct groundbreaking research.

In short, an investment in The Alliance is an investment in all these strong, successful, and sustainable partnerships that enable our momentum to continue.

We understand policy affects macro-level change and it has an important role to play in expanding the capacity of nonprofits and philanthropy. The work being done through our affinity groups, is poised to influence public sector policy. Following the model of the Education Affinity Group that involves philanthropy, nonprofits, and public sector stakeholders, we will be creating two new affinity groups that will focus on family economic success and health.

Our ability to scale and sustain the proven and promising efforts nonprofits and philanthropy are leading in our state relies on our ability to effect policy change at the state level.

Policymakers are among many stakeholders who place a premium on efficiency, and our experience providing high-quality training, technical assistance, and evaluation has created a unique opportunity to support the public sector entities that grant funds to the state's nonprofits.

Currently, we are in conversation with the state departments of human services, health, and transportation about The Alliance providing training, technical assistance, and consultation services to ensure state-funded programs and initiatives led by nonprofits are delivered in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Through our Innovations Lab, we are creating something groundbreaking for the field, and in the coming months we will be offering support to other entities interested in developing a similar model. We believe democratizing technology, diminishing power dynamics, and fostering meaningful relationships and connections based on common interests and collaboration are the future of nonprofits and philanthropy. That is what the Innovations Lab is about.

These four areas are the visible petals that directly and indirectly impact every mission-based organization in our state. That's the flower. Our wheel—the ideas and initiatives that keep our work moving forward—may not be as visible but they equally important.

The first, and maybe the most important, part of the wheel is our firm commitment to Diversity Equity and Inclusion. We use this lens to analyze and scrutinize our work,

challenging ourselves, our members, and our partners to be bold in efforts that promote diversity, champion equity, and prioritize inclusion. For us, this is a nonnegotiable and is reflected in everything The Alliance does.

Our communications efforts drive the ability to serve our members, advance state and federal policy, encourage investment in our state's nonprofit infrastructure, and share best practices.

We are building a skilled team to facilitate open, transparent, and honest communication with our members, partners, and the public. Beyond just letting people know who we are, what we do, and why we do it, our communications aim to demonstrate our impact, share successes that can be scaled, learn from others, and propel the field with new ideas.

The final section of the wheel is accountability and evaluation. It surrounds everything we do, enabling us effectively measure success, track progress, and properly document achievements. We conduct and commission research, including our seminal studies on the transfer of wealth and philanthropic giving in Mississippi, and we use evaluation to benchmark our progress and improve our efforts.

This important work we are doing would not have been possible without early investment and support from a range of partners—but, we need additional investment and support to keep this work going. Your support will help improve the quality of life for families, children, and communities in Mississippi and it will show the field at large how to redefine the relationship between philanthropy and nonprofits, thereby increasing positive outcomes

Let's discuss how you can help us make The Alliance stronger as we lay the groundwork for an exciting future for Mississippi and the country.