The ideal of the American Dream is based on the premise that equality of opportunity is available to all. As social unrest gripped the nation in 2020, we saw a vivid reminder of the inequities that have plagued U.S. institutions for decades—from banking, healthcare, and housing to employment, law enforcement, and education. These systemic inequities have crippled the American Dream for so long for too many Americans.

There is a critical connection between education and opportunity in America, yet the history of education in the United States is complex and challenging. In the South, that connection has been particularly stark as there was a time in our nation’s history when people who were enslaved were legally prohibited from learning. Following the Civil War inequity was baked into the development of public education and unfortunately to this day our nation continues to struggle with the remnants of those inequities.

From the Peabody Education Fund in 1867 and the Slater Fund in 1882 that promoted the training of Black and White teachers across the South following the Civil War to the Jeanes Fund in 1907 and Randolph Fund in 1936 that improved educational opportunities for Blacks in the South, the mission of the Southern Education Foundation is rooted in the early work and support from wealthy abolitionists who were committed to education equity. While the work spans more than 150 years, the Southern Education Foundation name came to be in 1937 upon the merger of the Peabody and Slater Funds with the Jeanes and Randolph Funds—truly multiplying the impact. (For more on SEF’s history, please visit SEF’s website.)

Today, Atlanta-based SEF builds upon this rich legacy and leverages its expertise and credibility to promote education equity across 17 Southern states by giving educators, policymakers, and community leaders the knowledge and tools they need to reshape the current educational landscape. SEF believes education equity happens at the intersection of opportunity, access, and excellence, where—hand-in-hand—academic rigor and equitable learning power the full potential of every child. As one of the country’s oldest equity organizations, SEF is a respected, Black-led civil rights think tank and educational advocacy group. Given its long history of serving marginalized students, SEF has never been better positioned, or more needed, as it deepens its impact on equitable learning, a vital means of achieving social justice today—and tomorrow.

In 2018, with the dawn of new leadership, SEF’s Board of Directors recognized the opportunity to extend organizational impact yet reconnect with the historical roots from which many of its present initiatives have grown. As a result, the Board challenged leadership to consider strategic initiatives that could take the organization in new directions while honoring its legacy and resolute commitment to ensuring a quality public education is accessible to all. SEF’s leadership team developed programmatic concepts to elevate each SEF focus area—Leadership Development, Research and Policy, and Government Affairs and Advocacy. Leveraging internal expertise in planning and convening, SEF conducted a Fit, Ripeness, and Impact (FRI) analysis of ten strategic initiatives to prioritize areas of opportunity. Based upon this work, SEF identified and refined key priorities and is launching its Multiplying Impact Campaign to raise $20 million to invest in dynamic initiatives for the future.
W.E.B. DuBois, a great scholar and an early SEF fellow, shared this powerful sentiment more than 100 years ago—yet these words ring just as true today. The South has played and continues to play a defining role in social progress and sets the tone for the rest of the country. As the fastest growing region of the United States, there are great opportunities, as well as persistent challenges facing the South—beginning with the equal access to opportunity through education.

By 2015, the majority of students enrolled in public schools in the South were children of color and those from low-income households (as indicated by their eligibility for free or reduced lunch). If the nation, particularly the South, is to effectively respond to these changing demographics, it must elevate their voices, understand the needs of this new majority, and work to ensure that education can be the great equalizer.

- Nearly 84 percent of counties whose residents live in persistent poverty in the nation are located in the South.
- Eleven of 15 Southern states invest less than $10,000 per student per year, well below the nation’s per-pupil average of $12,512 and far less than states such as New York and New Jersey, which spend $28,228 and $22,424 per student respectively.

The Southern region of the U.S. has the lowest educational achievement and attainment levels in the nation. Insufficient public investments and inequitable school funding formulas exacerbate those shortfalls and present barriers to opportunity. For the South to make real progress, we must close the education funding gap that separates schools in affluent, White districts from those in low-income communities of color where Black and Latinx students, in particular, are disproportionately concentrated in poorly funded, low-performing school districts. This is a focus of the research, advocacy, and leadership development work of SEF.

The lack of monetary investment compounded with class and race are more often than not accurate indicators of the quality of public education afforded to students. Poverty, which disproportionately affects students of color, further erodes the educational opportunities available to them. And the costs are enormous. Poverty and deficiencies in education leave children of color and those from low-income households vulnerable to the associated plights of poor health, substandard housing, economic marginalization, homelessness, and high rates of incarceration. A student from a low-income household is 2.4 times more likely to drop out of school than a peer from a middle-income household—and 10 times more likely than a student from a high-income household. Following his or her withdrawal from school, the student’s prospects are often limited, particularly if that student is a Black male.

These disparities are growing at the same time the global economy increasingly demands educated, skilled workers for jobs in technology, science, and many emerging fields. In order to resolve educational inequity, we must ensure academic rigor and recognize students’ life experiences while shaping pedagogy in a way that acknowledges systemic inequities and more effectively meets students’ needs. We must do a reset of public education in the South and across the nation to achieve the full potential of every child.

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1 2020 U.S. Census
2 National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education
4 National Center for Education Statistics
5 Educationdata.org
SEF works to accomplish this bold vision by analyzing and amplifying promising ideas. SEF develops and disseminates research-based solutions for policymakers to grow the capacity of education leaders and influencers to create systemic change within K-12 and post-secondary education—ultimately elevating learning for low-income students and students of color in 17 Southern states. SEF frames these efforts with a three-pronged strategy that comprises Leadership Development, Research and Policy, and Government Affairs and Advocacy.

Leadership Development: Developing Leaders Today for Education Equity Tomorrow

SEF has always believed that creating new generations of leaders who can transform education and the lives of those furthest from opportunity is key to helping disadvantaged students. In fact, during Reconstruction, the forebears to SEF realized that building schools, purchasing books, and training teachers was an incomplete formula without leaders who would guide and continue the work. For more than a century, it has recruited and empowered fellows who have been committed to the same equity principles that gave rise to SEF so long ago and that drive the organization today. Leaders serve as a critical lever for advancing sustainable, equity-centered systems change. Therefore, SEF offers research-based, practitioner-informed professional learning opportunities designed to grow educators’ capacities to lead for racial equity and to ensure deeper learning outcomes for every child, regardless of background. Within the Multiplying Impact Campaign, SEF seeks to raise $7.05 million for Leadership Development to support the Southern Education Leadership Initiative (SELI), Racial Equity Leadership Network (RELN), School Leaders for Equity Academy (SLEA), and Black Career Readiness Accelerator (BCRA).

Leadership Development: $7.05 million

Southern Education Leadership Initiative ($400,000)
SEF launched the Southern Education Leadership Initiative (SELI) in 2004, extending its legacy of developing new talent in the field. SELI—an eight-week, paid summer fellowship—provides undergraduate and graduate students with intensive, immersion experiences in school districts, nonprofits, and state agencies. SELI fellows are actively working to advance racial equity, eradicate barriers experienced by low-income students and students of color, and improve education across the pre-kindergarten-to-college continuum. While much of their time is spent at the assigned placement site, SEF provides training and facilitates programming that prepares them for their roles and culminates their learnings. During the summer, they have the opportunity to grow as leaders by engaging with like-minded peers and valuable stakeholders and acquiring practical job skills through direct learning experiences under the guidance and supervision of seasoned leaders in the sector. Over its 17-year history, SELI has engaged more than 240 fellows across the 17 states in SEF’s geographic footprint and Washington, D.C. Today, these fellows are leading as educators, policymakers, and community and civic advocates. SEF seeks to continue this work leveraging investments to the program over the next three years, which would allow the organization to provide financial support to the 10 to 12 students in each year’s cohort associated with their participation.
Racial Equity Leadership Network ($450,000)
Despite decades of public education reforms, race and class remain among the most reliable predictors of student success in school, particularly in Southern states. This can largely be attributed to the reality that students of color and low-income students have been taught within school systems that unfortunately retain vestiges of discriminatory policies and practices. SEF created the Racial Equity Leadership Network (RELN) in 2017. RELN is an 18-month, fellowship program that annually engages a cohort of 10 to 12 executive level school district leaders who are committed to addressing persistent disparities in their systems and ensuring race and class are no longer the most reliable predictors of student achievement. Fellows participate in five, two-day convenings focused on facilitating psychological shifts that mobilize equity leadership and systemic transformation. Fellows also receive customized coaching and webinars to support the identification of context-specific challenges. Fellows leave the program with a network of peers to lean on and learn from in pursuit of fostering equity-rooted schools.

Since its inception, RELN has impacted the executive leadership of 32 districts—including 28 in the South. In 2020, nearly 230,000 students in 402 schools across the South benefitted from the training provided to the nine district leaders who graduated from RELN. SEF aspires to embolden this impact through the ongoing implementation of this program. Investments would support recurring convenings and would allow SEF to offer financial and technical assistance to fellows as they seek to implement an action plan that addresses an equity challenge during a six-month in-district design teamwork period.

DARE: A Dynamic Tool for Racial Equity
SEF, in partnership with the Learning Policy Institute, launched the DARE (Districts Advancing Racial Equity) tool, a practical and accessible resource for understanding, assessing, and advancing racial equity within local school districts. DARE allows leaders to conduct equity assessments, set equity-oriented goals, and track progress.

The DARE tool helps participants in RELN enact policies and practices that lead to a more equitable, effective education system that maximizes student potential and works toward an explicit vision for equitable learning.

“\textit{The Racial Equity Leadership Network helped me think about myself as an equity leader no matter what seat I sit in. So every conversation happens through an equity lens.}”
— Rebecca Kay, RELN participant and Chief of Information and Accountability, Oklahoma City Public Schools

2017 Racial Equity Leadership Network Cohort
School Leaders for Equity Academy ($3,000,000)
As SEF reflects on the pervasive impact of RELN and SELI, which have served as the cornerstone of its leadership development work, the organization seeks to build on their success. SEF now looks to add the School Leaders for Equity Academy (SLEA) to its portfolio of programming to ensure its reach to those embarking upon their journey to address continuing injustices in education and extending to district leaders who play a vital role in leading system-wide change.

The SLEA shares the same objectives as RELN but exclusively engages principals in the South who are committed to rooting out racial bias and inequitable practices in the schools they lead in a 12-month professional learning program. Notably, SLEA deepens their awareness and understanding of the historical drivers while making connections to policies and practices today that perpetuate disparities; sparks an assessment of internalized beliefs and biases of marginalized communities; provides necessary support for establishing a racial equity vision, creating actionable solutions to address issues and affirming equity as a fundamental value; and it fosters a robust network of equity-oriented leaders.

Funding provided for SLEA would support the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the annual convening of cohorts of 15 to 17 principals from across SEF’s 17-state footprint. These principals are leading schools with populations of as many as 500 students, creating the potential for SEF to reach up to 8,500 due to the learnings those participants take back to their school communities. Future programmatic components of SLEA will be informed by participant surveys and demonstrated outcomes.

Workforce Development: Black Career Readiness Accelerator ($3,200,000)
Experience demonstrates that when higher education institutions make purposeful connections between learning and work, student completion rates rise, and employment and wage outcomes improve. This requires educational institutions to offer innovative curriculum and instructional strategies that equip students to become employees, attaining the skills necessary for companies to compete and remain sustainable. Consequently, a greater premium is placed on hiring employees who bring an adaptable set of skills and meaningful credentials in expanding fields. Additionally, companies in many industries are deeply committed to building a diverse workforce, one that better represents the customers they serve and the communities where they reside. These dual opportunities of diversifying and strengthening the talent pipeline while responding to an evolving set of skill-demands requires institutions to build new capacities and partnerships to position graduates for success in a rapidly changing economy. SEF is drawing upon its roots in workforce development to launch the Black Career Readiness Accelerator (BCRA) which will serve as an example for how this can be done at scale.

SEF will partner with Education Strategy Group, which works to improve the capacity and performance of the U.S. education system, to work with two cohorts comprised of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and two-year vocational education institutions. During their 18-month engagement, SEF will focus on building their capacity to collaborate with employers to ensure that academic programs provide students the education, skills, and support needed to successfully transition into the workforce. SEF intends to launch this initiative in Georgia and Alabama.

Investments in BCRA would be used to aid SEF in driving activities of BCRA and provide technical assistance and support to individual institutions. SEF will develop a public policy framework that helps institutions understand ways to leverage public funding for their BCRA-related work as well as develop federal and state policy recommendations that bolster career pathway programs at these schools.
Research and Policy:  
Leveraging Research to Shape Policy and Achieve Social Justice

Quality research often is not available in a timely manner or accessible format to inform the policymaking process. Even less research is available that directly speaks to the needs, challenges, and opportunities of the new majority of students of color and students from low-income families in the South. SEF has long focused on research as a foundational aspect of its mission. Recent SEF research included Looking Back, Looking Forward: What It Will Take to Permanently Close the K-12 Digital Divide, which was incorporated into successful efforts to seek expanded state and federal funding to address this issue. (For more on SEF’s recent research, please visit SEF’s website.)

SEF is committed to delivering timely thought leadership that keeps race, class, and geography front-and-center in the education debate and to accelerating ideas and solutions from those who are most vulnerable and impacted by racial and economic inequities in the South. Through funds raised in the Multiplying Impact Campaign, SEF will grow its body of original research, provide policy analysis and solutions, and promote thought leadership, particularly of established and emerging Black scholars. SEF seeks to raise $4.45 million for Research and Policy to support the Strengthening Early Childhood Education in the South (ECE) initiative, Education Issues Forum, Juvenile Justice Education Reform, and OpEd Project.

Research and Policy: $4,450,000

Strengthening Early Childhood Education Policy in the South ($3,000,000)
Every year, 1.5 million babies are born in the South with most being children of color and children from low-income families often disconnected from the educational, financial, and health resources needed for a healthy start in life. A child’s experience and environment between birth and age 5 are foundational to good health, educational attainment, and overall well-being. Research has shown that early childhood education is a key lever for education equity and that when achievement gaps close, it is most often because of gains made in the early years. Despite a shared understanding of its importance and bipartisan support for early childhood education in the Southern states, there is no dedicated policy or research hub in the South that harnesses data to advance equity in early childhood education. With proper funding for this initiative, SEF will change that by developing scalable practice and policy solutions that create the conditions for children and families throughout the South to rise out of poverty and achieve better life outcomes.

“Problems such as literacy, math, and reading have plagued Southern Black children for a long time. Research is vitally important to addressing these areas. SEF is working to close the opportunity gaps and that begins with education. Everything starts with education.”

—Michael Nettles, Ph.D., Chairman of the Board, Southern Education Foundation
Building upon its historic leadership as a chief architect in the movement to establish public kindergartens in the South and address other critical early childhood education issues, SEF’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) initiative will engage in data collection, tracking, and reporting; sharing and scaling; and building leaders in the field. With sufficient support for this initiative, SEF will combine data analysis and storytelling to report on the condition of children of color and children from low-income families. Notably, SEF will revive its report on the state of Pre-K in the South as an annual or biannual publication. SEF will also be able to scale policy solutions and can build its capacity to provide ongoing technical assistance to agency leaders by sharing briefs, analyses, and research with policymakers and practitioners to inform their decision-making on critical issues of education policy. Lastly, SEF will diversify the field of research and policy analysts through a partnership initiated with Early Childhood Policy in Institutions of Higher Education (ECPIHE) at Teacher’s College—Columbia University’s National Center for Children and Families.

SEF is working with ECPIHE to ensure that those collecting and analyzing data offer representation from the communities most often impacted by research and approach this work through an equity lens. SEF intends to accomplish this goal by providing stipends to graduate level minority students enrolled in degree programs across ECPIHE’s network of institutions to support their matriculation. SEF envisions supporting two cohorts of 30 students, spanning the initial three-year period of this partnership.

Additionally, to deepen and expand the capacity of the field, SEF aspires to work with ECPIHE to solidify partnerships with HBCUs, ultimately establishing policy centers, alliances, and certificate programs on these campuses. In doing so, SEF and ECPIHE will leverage the mission of these institutions—educating minority students—and further incorporate a racial equity perspective in the research and analysis practices within early childhood education policy. As an initial step towards this goal, the research and policy team at SEF will lead a rigorous analysis of the landscape of HBCUs to understand the capacity and infrastructure required to launch the advanced degree programs in early childhood education policy on these campuses. Funds provided would be used to support this work.

**Education Issues Forum ($1,200,000)**

For generations, SEF has engaged educators and thought leaders in discourse around relevant educational issues and trends. The Education Issues Forum continues that tradition. This annual assembly will virtually convene as many as 200 multisector leaders and stakeholders who represent industries ranging from philanthropy and academia to entertainment and sports. The forum will provide a space to explore current research-based trends and projections across the pre-kindergarten-to-college continuum, examine policy and practice, elevate the voices of influencers who promote education as a social justice issue, address systemic challenges, and host exploratory discussions on the future of education equity work.

SEF will also disseminate its research to stakeholders and other participants in the form of briefs, talking points, and fact sheets. This Education Issues Forum aims to position SEF as a continued thought leader, to generate fresh ideas, and to establish new partnerships that influence long-term systems change in order to improve student outcomes and strengthen communities. Funds provided will underwrite all costs associated with the planning and execution of this initiative for the next three years.


**Juvenile Justice Education Reform ($150,000)**

With the persistence of national tragedies involving law enforcement, and the ongoing over policing of communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, demands for dramatic improvements in our nation’s justice system have become bold and prominent. School discipline policies emphasize these concerns, exacerbating the pipeline to prison and removing far too many students from the classroom than SEF believes necessary. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, Black students are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than White students, and research in Texas found students who have been suspended are more likely to be held back a grade and drop out of school entirely. Repeated offenses in schools with police presence often expedites a student’s pathway into the juvenile justice system. The disruptions these youth, predominately minority males incarcerated for minor offenses, experience in their schooling is further compounded by the substandard education they receive once documented into the system.

About a decade ago SEF produced *Just Learning*, a report that unveiled the stark disparities and inequities in education of incarcerated youth throughout the Southern region. The report provides in-depth recommendations for states to implement to ensure youth leave the juvenile justice system with the skills and education necessary to reenter school, secure jobs, and become productive members of society. While this report remains viable for advancing more equitable policies in the education of children who are suspended, expelled, or incarcerated, SEF must update this research to better inform and influence the conversations centered around juvenile justice reform and the education of the nation’s incarcerated youth. Adequate funding for this initiative would support these research efforts.

**OpEd Project ($100,000)**

SEF is developing a cadre of research fellows and partnered with the OpEd Project to bring its nationally recognized program to HBCUs. Twenty professors from Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Clark Atlanta University have been paired with experienced journalist mentors from TED, The New York Times, CNN, and other media outlets, and participated in writing workshops that translated their research into policy-relevant opinion editorials, blogs, and other media content. SEF seeks funding to continue and expand this partnership with other HBCUs across the South.

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6 Council of State Governments Justice Center and Texas A&M University’s Public Policy Research Institute
Government Affairs and Advocacy: Convening for Change

The educational challenges that face historically marginalized children and their families are too great for one organization to tackle. Success requires strategic, ongoing multi-sector collaboration. For this reason, SEF engages in a range of partnerships and coalitions designed to attack the root causes of educational inequities by providing information to and strengthening the capacity of advocates and policymakers.

One vital aim of SEF is to help shape policy at the local, state, and federal levels. Through policy briefs, legislative and political analyses, advocacy letters to elected and agency officials, and position statements, SEF advances policies that lead to positive systems change in the South. SEF invests in developing and nurturing strong relationships with policymakers and grassroots organizations to increase understanding for the practical application and advancement of equitable education policies. In addition, SEF undertakes its advocacy work in collaboration with some of the nation’s leading civil rights organizations, including the Southern Poverty Law Center, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Education Law Center. SEF also works with some of the South’s leading law firms, which provide pro bono assistance in addressing legal challenges to education equity. SEF seeks to raise $5.5 million for Government Affairs and Advocacy to support the Southern Policy and Practice Network 2.0 (SP&PN) and the Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellowship.

Government Affairs and Advocacy: $5,500,000

The Southern Policy and Practice Network 2.0 ($1,500,000)

In 2018, SEF launched the Southern Policy & Practice Network (SP&PN) which is a learning collaborative that has convened more than 35 stakeholder organizations from Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and Texas. Stakeholder grassroots organizations across these states engage in bi-weekly virtual meetings to share ideas and approaches to impact legislation. SP&PN’s core objective is to ease the challenges of collaboration by identifying core messages and building cohesive communication strategies among organizations within the same state. The network advances learning through partnerships that promote coalition building among peers and designs a digital learning community for ongoing connectivity. The resources and skills acquired through this initiative enable those engaged to enhance their reach and gain traction among policymakers and media markets to ignite systemic and meaningful change.

SEF now seeks to build upon the SP&PN model by establishing SP&PN 2.0. This second phase will add community advocates (parents, students, faith leaders, and policymakers among others) from six additional states. Participants will study the public policy issues that most impact student success, yield advocacy support to enact policy change, and receive assistance to address legal equity challenges. Funds provided will underwrite all costs associated with the planning and execution of this initiative for the next three years. Key activities, conducted over a series of policy academies, will include trainings, presentations, data and regional trend analysis, expert testimony, and peer learning.
Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellowship ($4,000,000)

SEF believes developing talent with a dedicated focus on civil rights is vital to improving education access and opportunities in the South. SEF in partnership with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) seeks to develop the **Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellowship** which will champion equitable educational opportunities and provide training for new civil rights attorneys in honor of the late Lynn Walker Huntley, a trailblazing civil rights attorney who later led SEF as its first woman president.

This initiative will prepare one young attorney per year to perform legal research and analysis on issues of education policy and practice. Fellows will receive ongoing professional development and mentorship from SEF and SPLC. The inaugural fellowship begins September 2022 and will be hosted by SEF. Funds provided for this initiative will establish an endowment for the position as well as funds for marketing and evaluation of the impact of the fellowship. SEF has received an initial investment of $250,000 from the Ford Foundation to help fund this fellowship opportunity. Huntley led the Civil Rights and Justice Program at the Ford Foundation, and this early investment honors her impact and serves as an endorsement of her legacy.

Organizational Capacity Building and Sustainability: Strengthening SEF

Organizational Capacity Building and Sustainability: $3 million

As SEF implements its plans in the coming years, it fully recognizes how new and expanding programs will require greater capacity throughout the organization. Those programs will require stronger financial capacity and greater organizational capacity in terms of new staff members to support and lead their launch, growth, and long-term success. In addition, SEF seeks to grow unrestricted funds to embrace time-sensitive opportunities within research and advocacy as the need arises. SEF is confident that the right level of organizational capacity today—and in the coming months as these new programs become operational—will ensure not only that its vital programs flourish in the near term, but that the organization can sustain them over the long run.

Through funds raised in the **Multiplying Impact Campaign**, SEF will raise $3,000,000 to support organizational capacity building and sustainability of the organization.
“My grandfather, the grandson of enslaved Africans in America, was so passionate—he connected education to opportunity. He had a fierce focus on my education and the education of my sisters. He was a long-time, well-respected teacher in the Mississippi Delta. The connection between lack of education and enslavement was strong in his mind. Our work, the work of the Southern Education Foundation, addresses the deep, persistent disparities in our education system. We can and we must strengthen education and opportunity in the South and across the nation.”

—Raymond Pierce, President and CEO, Southern Education Foundation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiplying Impact Campaign Summary</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Southern Education Leadership Initiative (SELI) ($400,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Racial Equity Leadership Network (RELN) ($450,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School Leaders for Equity Academy (SLEA) ($3,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Workforce Development: Black Career Readiness Accelerator (BCRA) ($3,200,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research and Policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strengthening Early Childhood Education Policy in the South ($3,000,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Education Issues Forum ($1,200,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Juvenile Justice Education Reform ($150,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- OpEd Project ($100,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Southern Policy and Practice Network 2.0 ($1,500,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellowship ($4,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Capacity Building and Sustainability</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CAMPAIGN TOTAL</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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The American Dream remains elusive for far too many people and current times provide graphic reminders of the systemic inequities plaguing our nation. However, the work of the Southern Education Foundation over the past century and a half has helped prepare us for a better future—a future where equality of opportunity is available to all. As the nation, and particularly the South, examines its history of racial injustice and the extent to which systemic discrimination continues to marginalize individuals of color and those from low-income households, SEF is here to meet this moment—as it did after the Civil War, as it did during the Civil Rights era, and as it has done at every step in its long fight for educational justice.

The education landscape is not static, and neither is SEF’s approach. SEF engineers cascading change through its core strategies of leadership development, research and policy, and government affairs and advocacy and exponentially multiplies its impact by:

- equipping leaders with knowledge and tools they can share with educators and students in the classroom to ensure education can be the great equalizer;

- delivering original research that keeps equity at the forefront of the education debate; and

- advocating for policy changes that improve the framework in which equitable learning can take root and flourish.

SEF’s Multiplying Impact Campaign will deliver the funding necessary to build education equity throughout the South, to realize a more just society for vulnerable students and their families—and to bring within reach of all students the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in the life they imagine.