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The Ascend Fund Announces Over Half a Million in Grant Funding for Pilot Initiative Focused on Electing Women to State Legislatures

Pilot to launch in Michigan, Mississippi, and Washington to accelerate gender parity in politics

SEATTLE – Today, [The Ascend Fund](#), a collaborative fund dedicated to accelerating the pace of change toward gender parity in U.S. politics, announced \$540,000 in available grant funding to nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations in Michigan, Mississippi, and Washington state to increase the number of women serving in the states' legislatures.

“Critical policy decisions are made by state legislators. By investing in women, we are not just creating a more reflective democracy, we are investing in the health and stability of our political institutions,” said Abbie Hodgson, Director of The Ascend Fund.

Women are more than half the population, but less than one-third of elected officials. At the current rate of change, women won't reach political parity in the U.S. for nearly 100 years. To accelerate the rate of change, organizations selected to participate in this two-year, three-state pilot will receive up to \$100,000 in funding to:

- Build state coalitions of like-minded groups that share a commitment to gender parity, racial equity, and reproductive rights.
- Identify common and unique barriers hindering women's success in reaching state elected office and develop strategies to remove, reduce, or circumvent those barriers.
- Increase the number of women running for the state legislature through targeted, coordinated, community-based recruitment.
- Provide women with the training, tools, resources, and support necessary to successfully run for the state legislature.
- Highlight women's underrepresentation and normalize women's leadership through public messaging campaigns.

“This pilot will allow us to identify common barriers women face, and test and evaluate strategies to overcome them in three very different political environments,” said Hodgson. “We expect to learn invaluable lessons that will inform our approach in the other 47 states as we move towards our goal of achieving 50% representation in all 50 states by 2050.”

Additional information:

- Applications are due by August 13, 2021. Interested organizations can view the request for proposals and apply at: www.theascendfund.org/RFP.
- Learn more about The Ascend Fund's [Start with the States strategy](#), read our column [“Why Electing More Women to State Legislatures is the Right Thing to Do,”](#) and check out the fact sheets about women's representation in [Michigan](#), [Mississippi](#), and [Washington](#).

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About The Ascend Fund

The Ascend Fund is a collaborative fund dedicated to accelerating the pace of change toward gender parity in U.S. politics. The fund pools philanthropic capital to support nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations that are working to ensure women have access to the resources and support they need to run for office, and that are breaking down the barriers that prevent women from running and winning.

The Ascend Fund has awarded nearly \$6 million in grants to date. In 2020, The Ascend Fund's 12 national partners trained more than 36,000 women and more than 500 women stepped up to run. Women trained by Ascend partners had a 70% win rate in their primaries and 62% win rate in their general elections – nearly double the national average for women candidates. The Fund is powered by Panorama.

For more information visit theascendfund.org.

About Panorama Global

Panorama, a Seattle-based 501(c)(3) organization, is a platform for social change. Our goal is to achieve maximum impact by partnering with visionary leaders to co-develop solutions to hard problems. We use our voice when it counts, and initiate projects when we see gaps that need to be filled.

For more information visit panoramaglobal.org.