

Women's Foundation of the South (WFS), Urban League of Louisiana (ULLA), and Kindred Futures Convene Regional Leaders

Panel Explores Entrepreneurship As Emerging And Critical Pathway to Economic Security, Wealth Building, and Self-Determination Amid a Rapidly Changing Economy

NEW ORLEANS, LA, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Women's Foundation of the South (WFS), in partnership with the Urban League of Louisiana and Kindred Futures, will host The State of Black Women in Entrepreneurship: From Resilience to Economic Independence on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at Common House in New Orleans. This event will bring together entrepreneurs, ecosystem builders, economic development leaders, and advocates to examine the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of Black women-owned businesses across the South.



The conversation comes at a pivotal moment. Recent labor market data indicates that Black women experienced some of the sharpest employment losses of any demographic group in 2025. According to an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute, Black women's employment rate declined by 1.4 percentage points, one of the largest annual drops in the last 25 years, while unemployment rose and labor force participation fell. Public-sector job losses, particularly in federal employment, disproportionately affected Black women and accelerated interest in entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic security, wealth-building, and long-term independence.

The Women's Foundation of the South exists to build the health, wealth, and power of women, girls, and gender-expansive people of color in the South. At a moment when Black women are

disproportionately experiencing job loss and economic instability, entrepreneurship is emerging as an increasingly important pathway to economic independence. By bringing together the leaders, institutions, and support networks that shape entrepreneurial success, WFS aims to explore what it will take to ensure Black women can not only start businesses, but have the support and resources needed to sustain and grow them.

“When Black women experience some of the steepest employment losses in a generation, the conversation cannot stop at workforce participation,” said Carmen Randolph, Founding President and CEO of Women's Foundation of the South. “We must also examine who has access to the capital, networks, technical assistance, and policy support necessary to build businesses and create economic opportunity on their own terms.”

Hosted by Women's Foundation of the South, Urban League of Louisiana, and Kindred Futures, the panel discussion will examine the impact of recent economic shifts on the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the South, including anticipated challenges, emerging opportunities, and policy priorities that will shape the future of Black women entrepreneurship.

Featured speakers include:

Host Representatives

Carmen Randolph, Founding President & CEO, Women's Foundation of the South
Judy Reese Morse, President & CEO, Urban League of Louisiana
Janelle Williams, Co-Founder & CEO, Kindred Futures (Moderator)

Panelists

Joni Alexander, President & CEO, Pine Bluff Black Chamber of Commerce
Patricia Cade, President & CEO, Tuscaloosa Area Chamber of Commerce
Klassi Duncan, Vice President of Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Urban League of Louisiana

The event will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. CST in the Remy Room at Common House, located at 420 Julia Street in New Orleans. Doors open at 8:30 a.m., and a complimentary breakfast will be provided.

Limited seating is available. Register at <https://givebutter.com/wfsjuly1event>. For additional information, please contact Laneceya Russ-Martin at laneceya@womensfoundationsouth.org.

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About Women's Foundation of the South

The Women's Foundation of the South (WFS) is the first public foundation of its kind dedicated to building the health, wealth, and power of women, girls, and gender-expansive people in the Southern United States. Founded in 2021, WFS enters its fifth year as both a philanthropic institution and a catalyst for regional transformation, investing in the people, movements, and institutions driving change across the South.

Led by experienced grantmakers of color, WFS mobilizes capital, strengthens movement infrastructure, amplifies authentic narratives, and fosters cross-sector collaboration to build the ecosystems necessary for lasting change. Grounded in the belief that those closest to challenges are closest to solutions, WFS centers the leadership and lived experiences of women and girls of color throughout the region. As a permanent, endowed institution, WFS is building a flourishing South where women, girls, and gender-expansive people are healthy, safe, well-resourced, and empowered to determine their own destinies. Learn more at womensfoundationsouth.org.

Learn more about the Urban League of Louisiana at <https://urbanleaguela.org/>.

Learn more about Kindred Futures at <https://kindredfutures.org/>.

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