



Press Release: Alabama Birth Equity Initiative

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Black Women-Led Coalition Launches Alabama Birth Equity Initiative to Confront State's Maternal Health Crisis

Yellowhammer Fund and partners unite midwifery, mutual aid, and policy advocacy to save lives and shift power

BIRMINGHAM, AL – In one of the most hostile Reproductive landscapes in the United States, where punitive laws, rural hospital closures, and chronic underinvestment have made pregnancy disproportionately dangerous, a coalition of Black women-led organizations today announced the launch of the Alabama Birth Equity Initiative. This statewide, community-driven effort confronts Alabama's maternal health crisis through a holistic, Reproductive Justice-centered approach rooted in the leadership, knowledge, and survival strategies of those most impacted.

Led by Yellowhammer Fund in collaboration with Margins: Women Helping Black Women, Oasis Women's Health, and Alabama Birth Center, the initiative addresses not just the symptoms of poor maternal health outcomes, but the structural conditions that create them. By combining midwifery care, mutual aid, leadership development, and policy change, the Alabama Birth Equity Initiative aims to save lives, expand community power, and dismantle the systemic barriers that have failed Black women and birthing people for generations.

"Alabama's maternal health crisis isn't just about a lack of doctors or closed hospitals—it's about the way policy, poverty, and racism have worked together to make safe birth a privilege instead of a right. In one of the most hostile reproductive landscapes in the country, we can't afford piecemeal solutions. The Alabama Birth Equity Initiative is about changing the conditions that put our lives at risk—by building care systems led by Black women, rooted in community, and strong enough to last for generations." — **Jenice Fountain, Executive Director, Yellowhammer Fund**

"Too often, conversations about maternal health in Alabama stop at the hospital doors. But the truth is, safe birth starts long before labor—it starts with stable housing, reliable transportation, respectful care, and communities that have what they need to thrive. The Alabama Birth Equity Initiative is about making sure those things aren't luxuries. It's about building the kind of everyday conditions where Black women and birthing people can live full lives, not just survive pregnancy." — **Celida Soto, Executive Director, Margins: Women Helping Black Women**
A Holistic Model for Birth Equity

This initiative will:

- **Create a measurable increase in the number of Black midwives** trained and practicing in Alabama through launching and expanding BIPOC-centered midwifery apprenticeships with mentorship, scholarships, stipends, and culturally competent preceptor placements
- **Create new mobile health units** that will provide reproductive health care services to rural communities that have been historically underserved.
- **Expand access to culturally competent, community-based maternal health services** in underserved counties through additional resources shared with coalition partners already doing this critical work.
- **Continue mutual aid networks through Margins: Women Helping Black Women**, offering 24-hour food pantries, emergency financial assistance, and direct support for housing, utilities, and childcare, recognizing that a healthy pregnancy is impossible without stable resources.
- **Advocate for policy changes** including Medicaid expansion, birth center protections, midwifery licensure, and the dismantling of laws that criminalize pregnancy outcomes.