



WOMEN'S  
FUNDING  
NETWORK

Learning, Leveraging  
and Giving for  
**High Impact**

Partnership for  
Women's Prosperity

*the* WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION  
of CALIFORNIA



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LEARNING, LEVERAGING AND GIVING FOR HIGH IMPACT  
Partnership for Women's Prosperity

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS



### Inside Front Cover

### Acknowledgements

- 2**    **About the Women’s Funding Network  
The Walmart Foundation**
- 3**    **Foreword**  
Michele Ozumba  
President and CEO
- 4**    **Introduction**
- 7**    **The Partnership for Prosperity:  
A Professional Learning Community**
- 11**   **What’s Working in Communities:  
Promising Practices and  
Best Strategies  
Across Cities and States**
- 15**   **Promising Practices of PWP Partners**  
New York Women’s Foundation  
Women’s Foundation of Greater Memphis  
Washington Area Women’s Foundation  
Women’s Foundation of Minnesota  
Women’s Foundation of Mississippi  
Women’s Foundation of California
- 22**   **Recommendations**
- 24**   **Conclusion**



## WOMEN'S FUNDING NETWORK

Women's Funding Network (WFN) is the largest philanthropic network in the world dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls. A network of 166 women's funds in 27 countries, WFN supports and champions the work of women's funds that believe a better world for women and girls is a better world for all.

Collectively, our member funds give away more than \$70 million per year and hold \$535 million in working assets. In 2013, we connected and energized our membership of 166 women's and girls' funds in 27 countries on six continents, which support women-led projects and organizations globally.

Through their membership with Women's Funding Network, individual women's funds all over the world have drawn on a networked approach, connecting women on the ground with leaders across many sectors, building collaborations and coordinating efforts necessary to achieve collective impact. Women's Funding Network supports women and girls around the world by growing the financial base of women's funds, uniting women's funds through collaborative actions for systemic impact, and building leadership and capacity to strengthen women's funds.

## THE WALMART FOUNDATION

In 2013, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation gave \$1.3 billion in cash and in-kind contributions around the world, surpassing 2012's total by more than \$244 million. Global in-kind donations accounted for \$1 billion, while \$316.3 million was given in cash globally.

It's our mission to create opportunities so people can live better. We consider it our responsibility to make a positive impact in the communities we serve. Whether it's through the grants we provide to the thousands of organizations that share our mission or through the inspiring volunteer efforts of Walmart associates, we are passionate about helping people live better. One community at a time.



## FOREWORD



Twenty years ago with the backdrop of the Beijing International Conference on Women, it was hard to imagine that the economic status of women in the United States would become the dominant issue on the domestic social agenda it has become today. The current reality of 42 million women living at the edge of poverty or in poverty in the United States with 28 million children growing up in poverty – puts a defining gender lens on the face of poverty unlike ever before in our modern times. Women are disproportionately underemployed, underpaid, and undervalued in today's economy.

Women's Funding Network is committed to closing the prosperity gap for all women. While 80 percent of grantmaking across the Women's Funding Network has historically gone to serve low income women, the Network has intensified its strategic focus on women's economic security over the past three years. This paper, **Learning, Leveraging and Giving for High Impact**, presents the first round of results from the **Partnership for Women's Prosperity (PWP)**, a professional learning community convened by Women's Funding Network in collaboration with six women's foundations based in the U.S. The paper also looks broadly at how women's foundations have put social innovation at the center of their grantmaking strategies in supporting women-led nonprofits in their communities. The PWP partners include: New York Women's Foundation, Washington Area Women's Foundation, Women's Foundation of California, Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, Women's Foundation of Minnesota, and the Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

The purpose of PWP is to share, examine, and discover successful models of multi-faceted, innovative grantmaking among this cohort of geographically diverse communities in which women's foundations are investing in women's economic security. Using a shared logic model and evaluation framework, the outcomes illustrate the effectiveness of this collective approach to accelerating and scaling the impact of women's philanthropy on this issue at local and national levels. Our overall goal is to help women who need it most reach their economic potential by gaining job skills, access to education, and securing employment in good jobs.

Women's Funding Network acknowledges the generous contribution of the Walmart Foundation in funding PWP and enabling women's foundations to reach more women, and increase our effectiveness in closing the prosperity gap.

**Michele Ozumba**  
**President & CEO, Women's Funding Network**



## INTRODUCTION

For three decades, increasing the economic security and well-being of women and girls has been a strategic priority of the Women's Funding Network (WFN) and its global network of women's foundations. From micro-enterprise programs focused on women entrepreneurs pioneered by the Ms. Foundation to ground-breaking and influential research on the economic security and well-being of women by the Women's Foundation of Minnesota (which provided the basis for the nation's first Women's Economic Security Act introduced in the state's legislature) to the re-imagining of public housing and case management by the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis through its Memphis Hope program, Women's Funding Network members continue to provide innovative strategies and models for service delivery, collaboration, advocacy, and resource allocation to the public and the larger philanthropic community.

Each year, WFN members invest more than \$100 million in programs for women and girls, and provide on-going technical assistance and capacity building to community-based organizations working at the nexus of race, class, gender, and other markers of difference. The goal is to strengthen communities and leverage state and national-level efforts to lift women and families out of poverty and set them on a path toward full economic security.

Over the years as a grand convener of thought leaders in philanthropy, an incubator of new projects, and a touchstone for the women's funding movement, WFN has partnered with foundations, corporations, and individual philanthropists to create initiatives that have shifted the national landscape and sparked critical conversations around the types of investments and economic opportunity models needed to create a more just and equitable society for all.

Standout examples include the Women Moving Millions Initiative, a project conceptualized and incubated at WFN that to date has raised more than \$293 million from 201 individual donors.<sup>i</sup> WFN also provided backbone support to the Women's Economic Security Campaign (WESC), a project that brought together four leading women's foundations to address the systemic causes of women's economic vulnerability and amplify the voices of low-income women in the public sphere.



The latest effort initiated by the Women's Funding Network and supported by the Walmart Foundation to improve the economic security and well-being of women and families is the **Partnership for Women's Prosperity (PWP)**. The Partnership is a collaborative initiative of six leading women's foundations from across the country and WFN. The six participating women's foundations include the New York Women's Foundation, Washington Area Women's Foundation, Women's Foundation of California, Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, Women's Foundation of Minnesota, and the Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

The overarching goal of PWP is to meet the challenge of our new economic reality by supporting strategies that will increase the long-term economic security of women and families through job creation and employment, systems-level change, and advocacy on the behalf of economically vulnerable women in the halls of power and in state

legislatures across the country. PWP also is a professional learning community designed to leverage the Network's collective experience and expertise on issues related to women and family economic security.

Since its inception, PWP partners have invested in more than seventy organizations in neighborhoods and communities across the country. By the end of the two-year project period, it is estimated that close to 16,000 women and girls will have participated in programs designed to improve their employability and economic security over their lifetime. It is our belief that entire families and communities reap the benefits and rewards of women and girls that are prepared to succeed in an increasingly global economy.

### **Meeting the Needs of Women and Girls in a Changing Economy**

The new economy characterized by a high demand for skilled labor, fewer social supports for low-income women and families, and the proliferation of low-wage jobs, has created a crisis among organizations, institutions, and foundations focused on building the economic security and well-being of women. Many organizations lack the infrastructure, resources, and capacity to accommodate the onslaught of newly unemployed or underemployed workers, and they do not have the girth to identify promising practices and strategies at the local, regional or state levels.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in 2014 the unemployment rate among women is 6.4 percent. For Black and Latina women, the unemployment rate is 12.1 percent and 10 percent respectively. Unemployment is highest among women with less than a high school diploma at 13.9 percent. When race and ethnicity are taken into consideration, the unemployment rate for women with less than a high school diploma is more than double for African-Americans and Latinas.<sup>ii</sup>

The new economy has left many women on the margins of the labor market. To be sure, in order for women to compete for jobs and earn competitive wages in today's labor market and economy, they would have had to begin to receive adequate training and education prior to the start of the great recession in 2007. This reality coupled with steep cuts to state and local budgets, speak to an urgent need to coordinate efforts, identify best practices regionally and nationally, and share information and research across communities of practice to deepen impact and reach.

This report aims to inform both current and future conversations regarding the long-term economic security of women and families. Specifically, it focuses on the promising practices and strategies employed by six leading women's foundations, and provides a useful framework and approach to grant making for systemic and lasting change in neighborhoods and communities across the country.



Information and findings contained in the report are a result of extensive interviews with the six participating women's foundations that are a part of PWP and other key stakeholders conducted June through December 2013. From the interviews, we were able to pinpoint common themes related to funding approaches and strategies across foundations, better understand the influence of place and local conditions on funded economic security initiatives, and grasp at a very fundamental level the challenges of replication and scale.

### **Applying a Gender Lens Makes a Difference in Understanding Economic Vulnerability in the U.S.**

With limited resources and funding, the key to success for small-to-mid size public foundations rests, in part, in their ability to maximize dollar-for-dollar return on investment. This is achieved by building intimate relationships with organizations and programs with the understanding of the needs of communities and the expertise to execute on identified goals and projected outcomes. Their successes are also shaped by their ability to share learnings and promising practices across various communities of practice.

For women's foundations with a clear commitment to building the economic security and well-being of women and girls, a clearly articulated gender framework and lens in relationship to the labor market, workforce development, employability, and earnings is critically important to their success as well.

Applying a gender lens to economic security and opportunity foregrounds the unique experiences and barriers faced by women and girls that are distinct from those experienced by their male counterparts in the labor market, in society, and in the home. These differences may include caretaking responsibilities, lower earnings and wages, the underrepresentation of women in particular sectors of the job market, and violence, among many other factors. A gender lens also places a heavy emphasis on the impact of the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and immigration status, and other markers of difference on economic mobility and opportunity in society.

Applying a gender lens to economic security and well-being makes it possible for women's foundations to identify the unique causes of economic instability for women and families and to work with grantee partners that are able to provide more holistic and nuanced approaches to direct service, systems level change, education, and training.



## THE PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S PROSPERITY: A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

PWP is more than a funding collaborative. It is a professional learning community of leaders and innovators from leading women's foundations who have agreed to break out of their silos and regional communities of practice to share strategies, innovations, and the challenges of implementing local and regionally specific economic security programs and initiatives focused on women and girls. In the Partnership, foundations also have the opportunity to consider how programs in other parts of the country can be adapted, scaled, or replicated in their communities.

To PWP, each partner brings its unique set of core competencies and perspectives on the economic challenges facing women and girls. These core competencies and perspectives are shared among members and they inform the on-going work of the group. Periodically, the group is briefed by national labor experts, thought leaders and community practitioners on issues related to workforce development, employment, work supports, and financial literacy to better understand the building blocks, as well as the hurdles, to economic success for women and families.

From the very beginning, PWP partners recognized the gaps and potential pitfalls of building a collaborative community focused on women's prosperity and economic well-being. Gaps cited included the lack of common definitions and language concerning the barriers to economic security for women and girls across regions and communities; the absence of systems and mechanisms for sharing strategies and best practices; the uneven distribution of research and evaluation results; and insufficient capacity to scale and replicate for broader social impact. As a result, these gaps were prioritized in the design and implementation of the learning community.

PWP is firmly rooted in a theory of change that holds that access to education and training, opportunities for career mobility and advancement, and access to quality supportive services such as housing and childcare assistance are critical to building the long-term economic security of women and girls in the U.S. There is also a shared understanding among the partners that in addition to the above, women must have the financial tools and education that will enable them to

create wealth, build savings, plan for retirement, and sustain their families over the long haul.

Accurately measuring success and evaluating the initiative is also a strategic component of PWP's professional learning community (PLC). From its inception, PLC members understood the importance of using data and information from the field to track progress. They also were deeply interested in creating an evaluative mechanism for understanding and sharing the outcomes resulting from their individual and collective efforts. Evaluation methods include interviews with PWP members and staff, the creation of a data matrix and dashboard to monitor progress over time, and the identification of collective impact economic measures and indicators.

The Women's Funding Network serves as the backbone institution, responsible for evaluating and measuring the overall success of the project, coordinating the priority area taskforces and PLC convenings, and measuring collective impact.

Since its launch in 2012, PWP leaders have contributed more than 100 hours of their time and significant resources to the learning community through regional convenings, specialized taskforces designed to track progress and impact, and internal meetings with staff and key stakeholders to disseminate information and identify points of strategic collaboration. PWP leaders also exchange and share promising practices and models that can be adapted, scaled or replicated regionally.

**PWP’s overarching goals are to lift up and amplify what works in local communities; shift the national landscape for economically vulnerable women in order to create new opportunities; and maximize the influence and resources of women’s foundations across the country.**



## PWP Learning Community Working Framework



## PWP Priority Learning Areas

To achieve its goals and leverage the power and expertise of the group, the Partnership for Women's Prosperity identified eight areas of learning. In the first two years of the project, five areas of learning were prioritized.

They include:

**Cross-sector partnerships**  
**Education and credentials**  
**Return on investment**  
**Fundraising strategies**  
**Evaluation**

In each learning area, there is a taskforce within the PWP learning community dedicated to building knowledge, identifying promising practices, and measuring the progress of the collaborative in each of the priority areas. In years 3 and 4 of the initiative, PWP partners will begin to focus on systems change, leadership development, and longitudinal studies to measure the impact of efforts over an extended period of time.

### PWP Priorities



## PWP's Five Building Blocks for Building Women and Girls Economic Security

The lived experiences of women, the local context and environment of the region, extensive research, and the voices of community practitioners and leaders drive strategies advanced and supported by women's foundations participating in PWP. Strategies are also shaped by the specific barriers to economic opportunity and success experienced by women including, but not limited to, lower wages, labor segmentation, caretaking demands, and in some instances lower levels of education.

To this end, the PWP learning community identified five essential building blocks related to building the long-term economic security and well-being of women and families. They are:

1. **Income and assets development**
2. **Education and workforce development**
3. **Financial literacy**
4. **Benefits and work supports**
5. **Quality jobs and stable employment**

### BUILDING BLOCK

### STRATEGIES

Income and Assets	Support efforts and programs to increase income through career mobility and build assets through savings, employer contributions, and other proven strategies.
Quality Jobs and Stable Employment	Advocate and support job creation efforts and programs that include higher wages, flexibility, benefits and upward mobility.
Education and Workforce Development	Support efforts to increase the educational attainment level of women and training for high demand fields and occupations. Includes English literacy, occupational credentials and basic education.
Benefits and Work Supports	Advocate for maintenance of work supports and social safety net including childcare, transportation, food and housing assistance.
Financial Literacy	Provide support and education on issues related to assets and savings, budgeting, credit and budget management, IDA enrollment, homeownership, and tax preparation.

Within these areas, PWP partners also identified three core strategies to achieve high impact outcomes: advocacy and systems level change, direct service, and capacity building and technical assistance. Across strategies and focus areas, the initiative served close to 16,000 women in six states and in hundreds of communities and neighborhoods.

## WHAT'S WORKING IN COMMUNITIES: Promising Practices and Best Strategies Across Cities and States

Individual PWP partners identified one or more of the five building blocks of economic security to focus concentrated effort on over the project period. With few exceptions, the strategies employed by the foundations to increase economic opportunity for women and to demonstrate impact have been at the core of their work for decades. The infusion of additional resources from the Walmart Foundation allowed the partners to go deeper, scale up local efforts, and work in partnership with other foundations and strategic partners to share knowledge and strengthen their internal capacity.

This section of the report focuses attention on the best regional and local strategies employed by PWP partners to improve the economic security and well-being of women and families. Additionally, it sheds light on several of the cross cutting themes and similarities among the partners with regard to their approaches to resource allocation and community partnerships.

### **For PWP Partners, Local Context and Need Drive Economic Security Priorities**

Women's foundations participating in PWP possess a deep knowledge of communities and the local or regional landscape. They also see themselves as perennial learners and allow new knowledge or shifts in the local, state, or federal landscape to influence or shape their work.

For example, higher than national poverty rates in California and Tennessee, have deeply influenced the focus and priorities of the economic security programs of the respective foundations. In addition to workforce development, both foundations have focused considerable resources and efforts to systems-level change and advocacy to influence policy and legislation at the local and state levels. Similarly, in the state of Mississippi, a higher than the national average teen pregnancy rate has prompted economic security programs that engage younger women.

**“For us, 80 percent of the people who live in poverty in our community are women and children. [Within] that context, the number of impoverished families that have to be served guides our work. It drives our priorities with regard to the work that needs to be done and then we focus on strategies that are nimble enough to meet the needs of women and children in our community.”**

**Women's Foundation  
for a Greater Memphis**



**“What makes women's foundations unique is the depth of knowledge of what's going on in the region broadly, and specifically to women and girls. [We] came to [focus] on economic security because of that knowledge of the community.”**

**Washington Area  
Women's Foundation**

**“Our approach to [economic security] is based on numbers—data and research. It’s also based on stories; based on what we know from our very deep and authentic relationships with grassroots advocates and leaders throughout the state.”**

**Women’s Foundation of California**



**“Because we know that the strongest grant making and policies to improve the lives of all Minnesotans is data driven, ongoing research is an important programmatic area of our work. In fact, our research is the foundation of our public policy work...Our new economic research provided the basis for the [first in the country] Women’s Economic Security Act of 2014, a comprehensive package of 17 bills introduced to the state legislature.”**

**Women’s Foundation of Minnesota**

## **Data and Sophisticated Research Inform PWP Partner Strategies**

All of the PWP partners indicate that in addition to listening to the voices of women and communities, they rely heavily on commissioned research and data to help shape and inform their economic security and well-being strategies. The result is deeper impact and more deliberate allocation of resources to neighborhoods and communities.

## **To Meet the Needs of Women and Families, PWP Partners Employ an Intersectional and Holistic Approach to Programming and Resource Allocation**

For most of the partners, economic vulnerability and insecurity are viewed as cross-cutting issues undergirding many of the issues facing women and girls, including poorer health outcomes and higher than national rates of unwanted pregnancies in some communities; domestic violence and sexual assault; low levels of educational attainment; the lack of quality, affordable childcare; and the erosion of the social safety net. For many of the partners, a singular focus on job training, workforce development, or unemployment was seen as inadequate for addressing the root causes of women’s economic vulnerability.

A prime illustration of how the partners use a holistic approach to economic security is the Memphis Hope Program of the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis. Through careful planning and strategic community partnerships the program helps women attain economic security by not only focusing on workforce development and training, but by stabilizing their environment and providing information and supportive services related to childcare, housing, and benefits.

## **Support for Multiple Cross-Cutting Strategies and Issues is Key to Meaningful Impact and Lasting Change**

PWP partners rely on multiple strategies from systems-level advocacy to capacity building and technical assistance to direct service in order to increase the economic security and well-being of women and girls in their region. As drivers of their economic security strategy, many of the foundations reported that they often served as advocates and as the “voice” of grantee partners in circles of influence, legislatures, the larger philanthropic community, and/or in other arenas.

**“For nearly 35 years, we played the role of a grantmaker, convener and policy advocate. We do have a very strong sense of what it is low-income women need to be economically secure.... We leverage our access to state legislators to advocate and influence [policy and legislation].”**

**Women’s Foundation  
of California**



### **Leverage Funds, Information and Resources Across Communities of Practice to Maximize the Return on Investment**

Most PWP partners report involvement in collaborative initiatives, taskforces, or other local, state or federal efforts focused on building the economic security of women, girls, and families. These partnerships enable women’s foundations to not only interject a gender lens into conversations focused on workforce development, poverty, and unemployment, but to pool resources and leverage additional funds and support.

### **Advance and Amplify What Works**

PWP partners take risks and make investments in new programs and initiatives that hold promise in building women’s economic security. To increase the chances for success, they provide capacity-building support and technical assistance to their grantee partners. In the event that efforts are successful and reach desired outcomes, the foundations are more likely to continue to invest and to replicate the model with their other grantee partners, and share the promising practices with their peers.

**“Our mission is economic security for women. We work within our communities, with business leaders, legislators, and our local community colleges to connect women to quality jobs with benefits and higher wages. Recently, we partnered with the Mississippi Coalition for Justice to reduce the interest rates on payday loans in lower-income communities. We were also able to partner with area banks to encourage women and communities to become banked and on issues related to financial literacy.”**

**Women’s Foundation of Mississippi**



**“We have a participatory grant making process that works on the belief that problems and solutions are found in the same place.**

**Donors, community actors, activists, [and] researchers are all needed for solutions of the problems and seizing opportunities.”**

**The New York Women’s Foundation**

**“We are early investors. We have invested at a level that could allow [grantee partners] to do something sustainable. We invested in their [potential] success—not testing them for failure, but invested in their success. That meant we provided technical assistance and capacity building assistance. We [also] introduced them and created more exposure for them to funders.”**

**The New York Women’s Foundation**

Relatedly, in addition to traditional proxies such as the age, size, reputation and brand of organizations, women’s foundations are more likely to consider the need in communities, the value of the organization to the targeted constituency, and the availability of other financial support for efforts in determining resource allocation. These considerations often lead to the resourcing of smaller grassroots organizations and initiatives that are unlikely to be funded by larger philanthropic institutions.

### **Participatory Grant making Frameworks and Approaches are Essential to Resource Allocation and Identifying Funding Priorities**

Women’s foundations have a direct pipeline to communities through a broad network that has been cultivated and nurtured through a commitment to direct community involvement and engagement. Because of their relationships with grantee partners, communities, donors, and other key stakeholders, women’s foundations have the ability to mobilize resources and respond quickly to an issue or a crisis, not just in terms of directing funds, but also in developing strategies and solutions.

All PWP partners utilized a participatory grant making model to allocate resources and identify priorities. The partners see themselves as part of or accountable to a larger social change movement, affinity groups, or causes, and were more likely to rely on small committees, advisory boards, or ad-hoc committees to inform funding decisions and strategies.

PWP partners represent a diverse range of women’s foundations from across the country with regard to size, capacity, and strategic priorities.

To the learning community, each partner brings its own unique set of core competencies and perspectives on the barriers to economic security for women and girls.

The following section highlights one promising practice from each foundation in one or more the five identified strategic priority areas.

## PROMISING PRACTICES OF PWP PARTNERS



**CORE COMPETENCIES**

High Impact Collaboratives  
Direct Training and Capacity Building  
Research and Advocacy

**STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS**

Income  
Assets  
Entrepreneurship

**GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

Hot Bread Kitchen, New York City



**CORE COMPETENCIES**

Workforce Development  
Asset Building and Financial Literacy  
Research and Education  
Early Care and Education

**STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS**

Education and Training  
Quality Jobs and Stable Employment  
Asset Building

**GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

Academy of Hope



**CORE COMPETENCIES**

Advocacy and Education  
Teen Pregnancy Prevention

**STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS**

Education and Work Supports

**GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

Mississippi Community College Board



**CORE COMPETENCIES**

Case Management and Benefits Supports  
Leadership Development  
Education and Training

**STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS**

Job Training and Certification  
Career Advancement  
Asset Building

**GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

Advance Memphis



**CORE COMPETENCIES**

Financial Literacy  
Workforce Development  
Research

**STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS**

Education  
Job Readiness and Job Training  
Leadership Development  
Economic Readiness

**GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

Girls Industrial Technology Class  
Two Harbors High School

*the* WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION  
*of* CALIFORNIA

**CORE COMPETENCIES**  
Policy Advocacy and Education  
Workforce Development

**Technical Assistance and Capacity Building**

**STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS**  
PWP Learning Community  
Metrics and Evaluation

# The New York Women's Foundation

Location: New York City

PWP Grant Award: \$700,000

Number of Women and Families to be Served: 2,400

**Income, Assets  
and  
Entrepreneurship.**

For the last 27 years, the New York Women's Foundation has invested more than \$42 million in communities across New York City to address the most pressing issues facing women and families -- from economic vulnerability to violence to educational access. Through its efforts, the foundation has reached

more than five million women and transformed communities by supporting frontline organizations that craft solutions rooted in the lived experiences of women and families across the five boroughs of New York City.

In a city plagued by double-digit unemployment in many communities and few high-paying, quality jobs for lower-skilled workers, the New York Women's Foundation developed an economic security strategy that not only focused on education and training, but entrepreneurship and small business ownership for women. With grantee and community partners such as the Business Outreach Center Network and Grameen America, the foundation, through its partners, have been able to provide microloans to help women start home childcare businesses and gain training and education to improve their employability.

## CORE COMPETENCIES

High Impact Collaboratives using an Intersectional and Holistic Approach to Economic Security  
Direct Technical Assistance and Support to Grantee Partners through Training and Roundtables  
Research and Advocacy

## STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Income and Assets  
Education and Training  
Benefits and Work Supports  
Quality Jobs and Stable Employment

## GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### Hot Bread Kitchen

Founded in 2007, Hot Bread Kitchen provides jobs and training to foreign-born women to increase the household wealth and income of immigrant families throughout New York City. In the program, participants bake ethnic breads utilizing many native recipes they bring to the program. These breads are then sold through farmer's markets, small groceries, and Whole Foods, and served in several fine restaurants throughout the City. In addition to training, Hot Bread Kitchen also provides culinary business incubation services to women-and minority-owned businesses in East Harlem and in the Bronx.

The New York Women's Foundation was an early investor and partner of Hot Bread Kitchen. In 2010, the foundation committed to Hot Bread Kitchen five years of core operating support to help build its infrastructure and capacity. It also provided on-going technical assistance and support.

As a result, Hot Bread Kitchen has grown exponentially and garnered many awards, including the Global Citizen Award from the Clinton Global Initiative. It is also well on its way to achieving self-sufficiency through revenue generated by bread sales. By 2015, Hot Bread Kitchen projects that its programs will be completely funded by the sale of breads, at which point they will begin replicating the training model in four additional cities nationwide.



## Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis

Location: Memphis, Tennessee

PWP Grant Award: \$400,000

Number of Women and Families to be Served: 770

**Job Training  
and Certification.  
Career  
Advancement and  
Asset Building.**

The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis (WFGM) understands that when women succeed, their families and communities prosper. To achieve full economic independence, women must earn higher wages and secure jobs in fields with career advancement opportunities. In addition, workforce

development efforts must be accompanied by individualized wraparound services for the entire family to ensure not only that women reach their goals, but that their children also are prepared to succeed.

WFGM has been encouraging philanthropy and fostering leadership among women for 19 years to support programs that enable women and children to reach their full potential. Through grant making, community initiatives and public-private partnerships, WFGM has invested \$14.9 million into the Memphis community.

Across the country, there is a shortage of high quality, affordable housing for lower-income families. Launched in 1993, Hope IV, a program of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), attempts to re-imagine public housing by providing supportive services to residents (the majority of whom are single mothers), lessen the concentration of poverty through the development of mixed-income units, and establish positive incentives for self-sufficiency.<sup>iii</sup>

Seeing opportunity and armed with a deep understanding of the day-to-day realities of women and families living below the federal poverty line in Memphis, Tennessee, the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis was able to forge a partnership with the Memphis Housing Authority to revitalize three public housing sites and win more than \$88 million in grant support from the Hope IV program.<sup>iv</sup> Today, the effort, aptly named Memphis HOPE, provides comprehensive, personalized case management services to families along with housing. It is the first and only revitalization initiative in the country to be spearheaded by a women's foundation.

## GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### Advance Memphis

Memphis, Tennessee has the second highest poverty rate among cities in the U.S. with more than 1 million people living in poverty and the unemployment rate is 11.0 percent, a figure significantly higher than the national rate.

Advance Memphis, a partner of the WFGM, works in communities where the unemployment rate tops 70 percent and poverty is a mainstay. The program provides training, education, and job assistance to low-income women. Specifically, the program provides soft skills job training; economic literacy and personal finance training; job placement and on-site work experience; GED tutoring; financial literacy workshops; and asset building incentives. Each program serves as a stepping-stone on the path to economic self-sufficiency for low-income women and families. Advance Memphis believes it is not enough to help someone "get a job;" training and education must accompany efforts to secure employment to make success more likely.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

Case Management and  
Benefits Support  
Housing  
Leadership Development  
Education and Job Training

### STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Benefits and Supports  
Education and Training  
Quality Jobs and Stable Employment  
Leadership Development



# Washington Area Women's Foundation

Location: Washington, DC

PWP Grant Award: \$1.1 million

Number of Women and Families to be Served: 5,846

## Workforce Development and Asset Building.

Helping women secure high quality jobs with family-sustaining wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement is essential to building long-term economic security. For a woman with less than a high school diploma or with few employable skills, obtaining a high quality job that will allow her to provide for her

family and save for the future is impossible without adequate education and training. Studies continue to confirm that the unemployment rate for low-skilled workers is nearly quadruple the rate for higher-skilled workers or those with a post-secondary degree.<sup>v</sup>

Since 1998, Washington Area Women's Foundation has mobilized its community to transform the lives of low-income women and girls through grant investments in workforce development; asset building; early care and education; and research grounded in the lived experiences of women throughout the region. They have also been critically engaged at the local level to bring attention to the unique and persistent barriers to economic security faced by lower-income single mothers. In 2013, for example, the foundation published a revealing case study on non-traditional job training programs for women that detailed the systemic and categorical barriers to workforce attachment for women.

Connectedly, to decrease the barriers to workforce attachment and support women who are seeking education and training, Washington Area Women's Foundation's Stepping Stones Initiative invested in community-based organizations to provide workforce development and supportive services to nearly 1,000 women last year. As a result of new or higher paying jobs, women increased their incomes by approximately \$3.7 million.

## CORE COMPETENCIES

Workforce Development  
Asset Building and Financial Literacy  
Research and Education  
Early Care and Education

## STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Education and Training  
Quality Jobs and Stable Employment  
Asset Building

## GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### Academy of Hope

In Washington, DC, more than 50,000 residents over age 25 lack a high school diploma or its equivalent. Through PWP, Washington Area Women's Foundation invested in Academy of Hope, a leading adult basic education provider in DC, to help low-income women improve their math and reading skills, prepare for and obtain the GED, and connect to college and the workforce. Academy of Hope believes in a "pathways" model that offers two routes to economic self-sufficiency: post-secondary education or advanced career/vocational training. In 2013, Academy of Hope served 216 low-income women.

The Academy of Hope, founded by two teachers who believed in the power of education to help break the cycle of poverty, is a ray of light for the many low-income individuals and families struggling to stay afloat in Washington, DC. The program provides education and basic literacy and math skills to predominately lower-income women and adults that are unemployed or underemployed to help them obtain long-term employment.

In 2014, the Academy of Hope was awarded the Georgetown University Legacy of a Dream award and in 2011 was awarded the Meyer Foundation Exponent Award, which recognizes outstanding non-profit leadership and management.



## Women's Foundation of Minnesota

Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota  
 PWP Grant Award: \$650,000  
 Number of Women and Families to be Served: 2,000

### Education and Financial Literacy.

Through its annual research and convenings in communities across the state, the Women's Foundation of Minnesota received one particular message loud and clear—economic security is the foundation for women's well-being and our focus should begin with girls. As a result, in 2002, the Foundation launched

its girlsBEST program designed to build the economic power of girls, ages 10-18. The program focuses on several main areas of economic power and security for younger women, including career tracking, financial literacy, leadership, and post secondary education readiness, among others.

To date, the foundation, through its girlsBEST Fund, has granted more than \$2 million to over 50 girl-focused programs across the state. girlsBEST Fund grantees demonstrate a strong focus on girls' economic development through programs focused on academics, entrepreneurial development, employment development & high-paying/high-skill careers, and public education & advocacy. girlsBEST Fund program participants have a 100 percent high school graduation rate, compared to 65-93 percent in Minnesota overall, and 97 percent go on to enroll in post-secondary education, compared with 34-54 percent in the state.<sup>vi</sup>

The girlsBest program is a huge part of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota overall strategy to build the long-term economic security of women, girls and families through programs focused on education, employment opportunities, and economic development.

## CORE COMPETENCIES

Workforce Development  
 Financial Literacy  
 Research and Education

## STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Education  
 Job Readiness and Job Training  
 Leadership Development  
 Economic Readiness

## GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### Girls Industrial Technology Class at Two Harbors High School Two Harbors, Minnesota

Two Harbors High School is nestled in the heart of Two Harbors, a small Minnesota town (pop. 3,600) located along the northeastern shores of Lake Superior. With funding received from the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, the high school is focused on building pathways for girls into nontraditional, high-skill/high-paid fields in science, technology, math and engineering.

Through its girls-only Girls Industrial Technology (GIT) class, the school offers real-time training for students (grades 11 and 12) on the use of hand and power tools, instruction on shop and tool safety, exploration of careers within the trades and industrial technology, and assistance with the post-secondary education needed to get there.

Through the GIT class, the girls are given experiences in industrial technology labs and shown that there are profitable and interesting careers in those fields for girls who decide to pursue them. The class also works in partnership with women industrial technology instructors at local technical colleges. Direct participation in the college courses helps the girls create pathways into future nontraditional occupations, specifically welding and millwright.



# Women's Foundation of Mississippi

Location: Jackson, Mississippi

PWP Grant Award: \$500,000

Number of Women and Families to be Served: 6,100

## Education and Work Supports.

When you are the only foundation in the state focused on women and girls, what you do matters that much more. The Women's Foundation of Mississippi knows this first hand and is the only grant making and advocacy institution in the state focused on building the economic

self-sufficiency of girls, women, and families through educational access, workforce development and teen pregnancy prevention. In 2013, the foundation awarded more than half a million dollars to support local and community-led efforts and projects in their strategic priority areas.

Without a doubt, there is a strong correlation between early motherhood and economic vulnerability among women. Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school, pursue post-secondary education or be economically secure later in life compared to their peers. Moreover, studies show less than 4 in 10 teen mothers graduate from high school, and a meager 2 percent go on to attain a college degree by the age of thirty. Mississippi has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation and nearly 25 percent of women in the state live below the federal poverty line.

Armed with the above information and support from the Walmart Foundation, the Women's Foundation of Mississippi partnered with the Mississippi Community College Board to launch an innovative program that provides tuition and wrap around support services to lower-income women and single mothers. The program helps them obtain a General Education Diploma (GED) while earning a one-year certificate in information technology at five Mississippi area community colleges. The initiative provides women with an entry into higher-paying fields and occupations that will be in demand for years to come.

## GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### Mississippi Community College Board

With support from the Walmart Foundation, the Women's Foundation of Mississippi provided a \$160,000 grant to the Mississippi Community College Board to provide tuition and wrap around support services (child care, transportation) for low-income female students dually enrolled in Adult Basic Education/GED and Workforce, Career and Technical Education programs at five Mississippi community colleges: Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Meridian Community College, Mississippi Delta Community College, Northeast Mississippi Community College, and Pearl River Community College. Funding from the women's foundation will help low-income female students matriculate into information technology fields such as health information technology (HIT) and other technical fields in which females are traditionally underrepresented, and thereby enable targeted female students to earn self-sufficient wages.



## CORE COMPETENCIES

Advocacy  
Education

## STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Education and Training  
Asset Development and Financial Education  
Wrap Around Support Services  
Youth Leadership

# Women’s Foundation of California

Location: San Francisco, California  
Grant Award: \$50,000 to participate in the Learning Community

Since its founding in 1979, the Women’s Foundation of California has awarded more than \$22 million in grants to over 1,200 community-based organizations in every region of the state. The Foundation’s work related to policy advocacy through its Policy Institute is often heralded as a national model for working with and alongside communities to bring about social change and increase economic opportunity through workforce development, increased work supports, and education. To date, The Policy Institute, with the support of 300 women representing organizations from across the state, has worked to pass 20 pieces of legislation that directly benefit women and families.

The foundation’s latest effort, The Bridge to Economic Security, is a workforce development initiative that uses the combined power of research, policy advocacy, and strategic grant making to help women attach to the labor market through meaningful employment. It also creates a bridge to higher pay occupations and industries for women in low-wage jobs through training and education in the health and personal care fields.

The Women’s Foundation of California is participant in the learning community and shares its experience and expertise related to program evaluation, metrics, and building social and human capital. It is not implementing an economic security program or strategy that is funded by the Walmart Foundation.



## CORE COMPETENCIES

Policy Advocacy and Popular Education  
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

## STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Workforce Development  
Work Supports and Benefits  
Economic Readiness



## RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE FIELD RELATED TO BUILDING  
THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC SECURITY OF WOMEN

### **Apply a Gender Lens to Grantmaking**

Employ a gender lens to identify and understand the barriers to full employment and engagement in the labor market for women. A gender lens foregrounds the unique experiences and barriers faced by women and girls that are distinct from those experienced by their male counterparts in the labor market, in society, and in the home. A gender lens also places a heavy emphasis on the impact of the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and immigration status, and other markers of difference on economic mobility and opportunity in society.

### **Advance Holistic Approach to Resource Allocation and Programming**

Allocate resources and support for multiple cross-cutting strategies that include policy advocacy, education and training, benefits and work supports, and job readiness and advancement. Support for multiple strategies ensures that the holistic and comprehensive needs of women and families are met as they move toward full economic security.

### **Amplify What Works**

For scale and replication, provide on-going technical assistance and capacity building support to organizations and programs with proven results and strategies to build the long-term economic security of low-income women and families. Technical assistance will allow organizations to build internal capacity, anticipate and communicate barriers, and strengthen their programmatic strategies.

### **Leverage Information and Community-Centered Research**

Use data and research to identify needs and priorities in communities and to allocate resources. Quality data and intelligence can help to identify gaps in services and pinpoint the greatest need in communities. For small-to-mid-size public foundations, research can also maximize return on investment by allowing them to develop targeted strategies and initiatives.

### **Enhance Leadership and Collaboration**

In building a professional learning community or working in partnership with other foundations and organizations, identify evaluation frameworks and anticipated outcomes that will illustrate the effectiveness of economic security programs or initiatives from the start. Evaluative frameworks should seek to capture the impact of the initiative on women, communities and regions; the potential for scale and replication; and the short and long-term outcomes and objectives.



## CONCLUSION

The promising practices and strategies presented in this report are just a small sliver of the enterprising and groundbreaking work occurring at women's foundations across the country on issues related to workforce development, education and training, work supports, and financial literacy. By using a gender lens and a holistic and intersectional approach to grant making, these foundations are able to maximize their reach and impact in communities.

Findings from the report confirm that women's foundations are both drivers and partners to communities and grantee partners. As drivers, they are able to synthesize information and research from their constituency to create a broad agenda and framework that is reflective of a shared vision for change and progress, and amplify it to the public and larger philanthropic community. As partners, they provide capacity support and technical assistance to grantee partners to help them reach desired outcomes and fulfill their missions.

Over the project period, PWP and their grantee partners have touched the lives of close to 16,000 women and many more families. In regions and in communities across the country, women are being set on a sure path toward full integration in today's competitive labor market, and they are realizing their potential.

PWP and its learning community are models for collaboration across communities of practice that serve to test and magnify the best ideas, programs, and strategies in the field. This paper, *Learning, Leveraging and Giving for High Impact*, is a springboard and a first conversation in a series of many on building the long-term economic security of women and families using a collective impact model that amplifies what's working on the ground and in communities across the nation.



<sup>i</sup> The Women's Moving Millions Initiative was conceived and incubated at the Women's Funding Network from April 2007 through April 2009.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Accessed April 2014

<sup>iii</sup> Housing and Urban Development. Hope IV Program Description. <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/programdescription/hope4>. Accessed November 11, 2013

<sup>iv</sup> Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis. Program Description of Memphis Hope. <http://www.wfgm.org/memphis-hope/overview.html>. Accessed on November 11, 2013

<sup>v</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Accessed April 2014

<sup>vi</sup> Percentage varies by race and ethnicity





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