



WOMEN'S POLICY INSTITUTE-STATE
Application for the Class of 2021



WPI-State is a policy advocacy and leadership training fellowship for genderqueer and non-binary people, cisgender and transgender women, and transgender men who want to build their skills to influence public policymaking at the state level.*

Application Release: Tuesday, August 4, 2020, 9 AM PST

Online Application Due: Monday, August 31, 2020, 5 PM PST

Application Status Notification: No later than September 24, 2020

* The term 'cisgender' describes someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth. The term 'transgender' describes someone whose gender identity is different from the one they were assigned at birth.

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Women's Foundation California's Women's Policy Institute (WPI) is a year-long program designed to train community-based leaders in California in public policy advocacy. The voices of people impacted by gender-based oppression, violence, and discrimination are often missing or silenced from policymaking processes. The goal of WPI is to ensure that visionary community leaders, their organizations and their communities can actively shape policies to transform the fundamental conditions that affect their lives, families, and communities. Moreover, WPI strives to increase the number and capacity of genderqueer and nonbinary people, cisgender and transgender women, and transgender men who are actively engaged in public policy— particularly those from Black, Indigenous, people of color communities, immigrant communities, trans and queer communities, low- income communities, and rural communities. By bringing individuals who experience gender- based discrimination into the policy process, WPI works to empower leaders who will advance a policy agenda that is responsive to the needs of all Californians.

The Women's Foundation California (WFC) launched our WPI-State fellowship in 2003. Over the last 17 years, we've trained more than 500 grassroots leaders throughout California in public policy advocacy at the state and local levels. The courageous efforts of our fellows have contributed to the passage of 40 new state laws and more policies have been created or impacted by our alums, transforming the lives of hundreds of thousands with their advocacy.

Because WPI-State is an experiential team-based training fellowship, over the course of a year our teams will learn about the policy process by researching, writing, and lobbying for a state legislative bill of their choosing while receiving support and guidance from an expert in public policy work. The fellows will develop relationships with key state policymakers, government employees and allied advocates; select a problem to solve; develop a bill; find a legislative author; and implement an advocacy plan to move the bill through the legislature. Applicants with varying degrees of past policy experience—from none at all to a lot—will be considered for the program. We are in uncharted territory and this pandemic has had a significant impact on policymaking at all levels, both in regards to the process and the landscape of what is possible. We anticipate that as the pandemic continues, we will see more shifts in priorities and the legislative process to adapt to current circumstances, which will require for WPI-State to be even more flexible.

As intersectional feminists for racial, economic, and gender justice, we are also making shifts to meet the needs of this time when we're in the midst of a global health pandemic, the economic downturn it has induced, the inequities it has exacerbated among BIPOC communities, as well as the continuing pandemic of institutional racism and anti-Blackness pervasive across this country. Each year the WFC chooses specific intersectional issue areas for WPI fellows to advance. This year WPI-State expects fellows to more explicitly integrate anti-racist and transgender justice lenses through their policy focus. In 2020, we are seeking applications in the following five [issue areas](#): 1) criminal justice reform, 2) economic security, 3) community health, 4) reproductive health, rights, and justice, and 5) trauma services and prevention.

This year we are accepting individual applications only. Individual applicants selected for the WPI-State will be placed in teams of five based on overlapping areas of interest, varying levels of policy experience, differing forms of issue area expertise, and other related criteria.

For more detailed information on the WPI-State application review process, eligibility and more, please visit our [FAQ](#).

OUR FRAMEWORK & APPROACH

Our social justice framework focuses on the structural causes of inequities embedded in public institutions such as government. WPI was developed in response to these structural inequities, and while we will make room to discuss oppressive systems and encourage each cohort to critique institutionalized oppression, the program's primary objective is to train participants to create progressive policy changes within the current legislative system. We recognize the need to dismantle and transform our political institutions and processes and there are many different means that lead towards liberation. WPI views policy advocacy as one powerful strategy to solving problems and improving the lives of our communities. It is our hope that after learning the process for what it takes to get a policy win, participants will be better able to continue the work of dismantling systems of oppression within public policy. Thus, program participants are enacting policies that make California a more just and equitable place today and are encouraged to work with their communities and organizations toward making our state's legislative process more open and accessible to all community members tomorrow.

Please note that harmful beliefs, practices, and behaviors persist within many sectors of the public policy arena. We do our best to prepare our fellows to respond to these dynamics, to inform our speakers and trainers about our social justice principles and the diversity of our WPI cohorts, and to create as brave an environment as possible for fellows experiencing multiple forms of oppression. Due to the nature of the public policy arena, however, we cannot guarantee that every space you will enter as a WPI fellow—both inside and outside the Capitol, and including retreats—will be safe or that every person with whom you interact, including speakers and trainers, will be trained in anti-oppression and anti-racist principles. If having safety is a requirement for you at this time of your life, the WPI might not be an appropriate program for you.

TRAINING DETAILS

How is the training program structured?

In a typical WPI-State year, fellows are expected to attend [five mandatory three- to four-day overnight retreats](#) in Sacramento and occasional travel to Sacramento to testify or work on their bill, in addition to the listed expectations below. Due to the high transmission rate of COVID-19 and that many of us live with multiple people, are parents or caregivers, or may be immunocompromised, we have determined that the safest option is to gather virtually via Zoom until further notice. Although we will not be able to meet in person, many of our goals and expectations remain the same:

- Five mandatory daylong, online retreats led by Women's Foundation California staff, policy experts and guest trainers.
- Four mandatory webinars. Additional webinars may be scheduled to supplement the trainings, and fellows will be asked to do everything possible to participate or watch the recordings afterward.
- Reading and homework will be assigned in advance of the retreats.
- Teams of five will each work in their own [issue area](#).
- Between trainings, teams will be expected to meet and hold weekly or bi-weekly conference calls and continue working on their bill.
- Experienced mentors will guide the teams through the process.

What do fellows do and learn who are in the WPI?

- Develop legislative and administrative policy advocacy skills;

- Learn how to conduct policy research using an intersectional lens and how to develop policy using a gender, racial, and economic justice framework;
- Gain knowledge and information about California’s policy landscape, including current legislative and administrative policy processes;
- Overcome perceived barriers and increase their confidence in participating in the policy process as it is today;
- Develop the relationships necessary to do coalition work that advances public policy;
- Produce state policy that reflects the needs of California’s cisgender and transgender women, non-binary and genderqueer people, transgender men, and their families and communities;
- Participate in sessions and dialogue regarding anti-oppression and anti-racism, gender identities, community building, and team building;
- Increase their participation in state policy formation and implementation;
- Build their communities’ capacity to use the policy process to address problems;
- Strengthen their relationships to and collaboration with other social justice organizations and movements in California;
- Create a peer learning environment among state-level advocates;
- Join a network of more than 500 community and nonprofit leaders who have already graduated from WPI-State and WPI-Local and are currently working in public policy at the local and state levels.

What do the teams do during the training program?

All fellows participate in the WPI as part of a team. Together, teams will:

- Research a state-level policy concern to determine whether an issue of concern can be addressed by state policymakers.
- Help develop and support a state bill by securing a legislator as an author, participating in legislative hearings, and lobbying for their team’s bill.
- Develop lobbying materials and engage in outreach for supporters for your bill.

What is the time commitment?

With the programmatic changes due to COVID-19, the training program now includes five multi-day online trainings, at least four webinars, various written assignments, ongoing teamwork between the trainings, and frequent communication with WPI-State staff. Although online, our retreats remain rigorous, intensive and usually consist of two to four long days (9am to 5pm). It’s important to come to the retreats rested and without the expectation that you will be able to work on non-WPI projects. At the same time, we try our best to uphold [disability justice values](#) such as sustainability, especially during this unforeseen time. We expect consistent and quick communication in the case that you need to miss a training session and you will be asked to watch the recording and/or complete an assignment in your absence. This program will require on average 40 hours/month from each fellow. Employers must be supportive of their employees and allow them to fulfill the fellowship commitments.

When will the training take place?

While the WPI-State fellowship is year-long, the training retreats are scheduled from October 2020–August 2021. All retreats will be held on Zoom. Applicants are asked to put these dates in their calendar now and hold these dates until a final determination on their application is made.

Key dates include:

- **Retreat 1:** Tuesday, October 20 – Friday, October 23, 2020
- **Retreat 2:** Tuesday, December 8 – Thursday, December 10, 2020
- **Retreat 3:** Tuesday, March 9 – Thursday March 11, 2021
- **Retreat 4:** Wednesday, May 12 – Thursday, May 13, 2021
- **Retreat 5:** Wednesday, August 18 – Thursday, August 19, 2021

- **Webinar 1:** Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 10-12 PM
- **Webinar 2:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 1:30-3:30 PM
- **Webinar 3:** Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 10-12 PM
- **Webinar 4:** Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 10-12 PM

Full participation in all sessions is mandatory. Additional webinar dates may be scheduled and fellows will be asked to do everything possible to attend.

What is the financial commitment?

- The fellowship is offered free of charge. The Women's Foundation California is committed to eliminating all financial barriers to access and we raise approximately \$20,000 for EACH fellow's participation in the program.
- For each virtual retreat, participants may receive childcare support via direct deposit to ensure their full attention and presence.
- Participants are required to have computer and internet access. If you do not have access to a computer, please [contact us](#).
- Costs associated with regular teamwork that takes place outside of the trainings (phone calls, etc.) will be paid by the participants.
- Each team will have a stipend earmarked to support its policy project.
- WPI-State will cover all travel and meal related expenses pertaining to a fellow's policy project should in person gatherings be deemed safe during the 2020-2021 fellowship year. We typically use a per diem or reimbursement-based system.
- Participants whose organizations have available funding for travel and meals as part of WPI-State retreats are not required to participate in the reimbursement-based system.

For more detailed information on the WPI-State application review process, eligibility and more, please visit our [FAQ](#).

ELIGIBILITY & CRITERIA

WPI Application Eligibility

- Genderqueer and non-binary people, cisgender and transgender women, and transgender men.
- Individuals living or working in California.
- Individuals working in a community-based or non-profit setting with the full support of their employer and/or supervisor.
- Individuals who agree to all [participation requirements](#) and whose employers agree to all participation requirements.
- If you are currently unemployed or self-employed, please review Question 3 in the [FAQs](#) and [email us](#) to discuss your eligibility.

WPI Fellowship Criteria

Successful applicants will demonstrate the following:

1. Depth of Issue Expertise
 - Individuals must possess deep content knowledge in their chosen issue area and connection to those affected by the issue, combined with the ability to speak with confidence and authority about the issue area (expertise can come from work, education and/or lived experience).
2. Teamwork
 - Individuals should demonstrate an openness to collaboration, a love of learning, a high level of emotional intelligence and an appreciation of diversity and innovation;
 - Individuals must be willing to work to bridge differences in personality and work styles;
 - Individuals must be willing to work on a team with others who have varying interests, collectively develop a policy project and actively work on the project, **even if it is not their organization's or community's top priority.**
3. Commitment to Policy Advocacy Work
 - Individuals must be able to articulate the value of learning about state policy to their employer, sector, the broader social justice movement and their own future work;
 - Individuals must be able to articulate why now is a good time to go through the program (i.e., have the time, support, interest, etc.).
4. Organizational Support
 - Individuals must demonstrate that they have the full support of their employers to participate in WPI and to spend staff time working on a policy project that includes lobbying;
 - Individuals must be able to state the value their employer sees in their learning how to advance state-level policy.
5. Commitment to Building Capacity
 - Individuals must be able to demonstrate how their participation in WPI will increase the policy advocacy work at their organizations or in their communities;
 - Individuals must have the ability and desire to bring the training back to their organization and community.
6. Time Availability
 - Individuals must affirm their ability to participate in all retreats, check their email daily throughout the program and dedicate an average of 40 hours per month to their team's

bill (excluding the scheduled retreats; time will be determined by the legislative calendar and needs of the bill);

- Individuals must allow enough flexibility in their schedule to advance their policy project between retreats.

WPI-STATE ISSUE AREAS

The Women's Foundation California's Women's Policy Institute (WPI) focuses on shaping just policies that will positively impact the lives of non-binary and genderqueer people, cisgender and transgender women, and transgender men in California. This year, WPI-State aims to feature teams working to address racism, anti-Blackness, and cis-hetero-patriarchy through the following specific areas:

Criminal Justice Reform

WPI-State will accept applications from representatives of organizations that work to address the harmful and oppressive impacts that the criminal justice system has on the lives of Californians, especially those impacted by gender injustice. We prioritize fellows from organizations that work to promote racial and economic justice. In this context, criminal justice policy projects may include, and are not limited to:

- Working to reduce the prison population and the numbers of incarcerated transgender people as well as cisgender women in the short- and long-term through prevention, ending jail expansion, and promoting alternatives to incarceration;
- Addressing the causes and reduce the incidence and impact of the disproportionate incarceration of Black people and people of color;
- Protecting the human and civil rights of incarcerated people;
- Expanding and strengthening rehabilitation and reentry programs for currently and formerly incarcerated people;
- Protecting and supporting the children and loved ones of incarcerated people; or
- Expanding access to public programs and benefits for formerly incarcerated people.

Economic Security

WPI-State will accept applications from representatives of organizations that work or support programs that improve the economic security of Californians, especially those impacted by gender injustice. This includes protecting low-wage and informal workers such as sex workers, advocating for the expansion and improved implementation of safety net programs, strengthening the diversity and size of the state workforce, and establishing standards for economic security. In this context, economic security policy projects may include, and are not limited to:

- Boosting funding for and access to quality childcare;
- Improving enrollment and alignment in health and anti-poverty programs;
- Facilitating access to occupational jobs for low-skilled, low-income cisgender and transgender women, non-binary and genderqueer people, and transgender men;
- Strengthening workforce development programs focused on job placement, retention and advancement;
- Expanding work readiness training or improving access to education, vocational and training services including basic skills training, computer literacy, and life skills training and in languages other than English; or
- Strengthening labor laws for people working in industries with fewer protections.

Community Health

WPI-State will accept applications from representatives of organizations that work to create places where families and communities are healthy, safe as is possible within our current systems, and ready to learn. We believe that health includes more than physical conditions; health has social, cultural and economic impacts on the well-being of individuals, families and/or communities. Health is also determined by racial, gender and economic circumstances, with direct ties to the history of anti-Blackness and oppression in our country. In this context, community health policy projects may include, and are not limited to:

- Access to health care/patients' rights: expanding access (e.g. Affordable Care Act/Health Reform) to quality health care; ensuring patient autonomy over decision-making; affordability/parity of coverage of treatments/medications; medical privacy;
- Environmental Health: air quality regulation, access to clean drinking water, climate change mitigation for low-income communities;
- Community Health: land use/transportation, school health, access to housing, food access/food marketing;
- Healthy Youth Development: violence prevention, school push-out policies, school-based health/mental health, trauma-informed services.
- Health Equity: cultural and linguistic competency in healthcare; shifting resources to food deserts.

Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice

WPI-State will accept applications from representatives of organizations that work to support programs that expand and protect the rights of all people to make informed decisions about and exercise control over their sexual and reproductive lives. Reproductive health, rights, and justice policy projects may include, and are not limited to:

- Promoting policies that are shaped by and responsive to people's needs and address the right to bear and parent children;
- Access to safe and legal abortion;
- Comprehensive sexuality education;
- Universal health care;
- The right to bodily integrity, especially for incarcerated people and BIPOC;
- The right to express one's sexuality, sexual orientation/identity, and gender identity/expression; or
- The right to a doula or midwife services;
- Intersectional ties with other social justice efforts, including the reproductive health impacts of environmental pollution, the state violence impact on parenting people, and the economic security of youth and families.

Trauma Services and Prevention

WPI-State will accept applications from representatives of organizations that work to reduce the negative impacts that violence and harassment, which is often gender-based, has on the lives of Californians. In this context, policy projects may include, and are not limited to:

- Expanding resources for sexual assault survivors on college campuses;
- Improving protections for victims of online sexual harassment and cyber-stalking;
- Protecting the rights of trans people who experience bullying and harassment in the workplace;
- Strengthening the rights of immigrant cisgender and transgender women and nonbinary people who experience domestic violence;

- Increasing outreach and education to reduce teen dating violence; or
- Strengthening existing law and policies that are intended to support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or bullying.

HOW TO APPLY—APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Application Requirements

Each applicant must complete the [Online Application Form](#) (see [instructions below](#)). As part of the online application, each applicant must (not in any particular order):

- Upload a completed [Applicant Requirements Agreement](#). This agreement should be initialed and signed by both the applicant and their employer/supervisor.
- Complete the two-part [Individual Narrative](#). The instructions and questions for the Individual Narrative section are [listed below](#). Please review them **before** beginning your application.
- Upload a one-page résumé with 12-point font and 1-inch margins.
- Provide individual, organizational and demographic information.

Application Instructions

Online Application Form

The steps to starting and submitting your online application through the Women’s Foundation California [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](#) are listed below. We STRONGLY suggest reviewing the instructions here before beginning your application.

- Step 1: Each applicant must create a user account

To begin the application process, visit our online fellowship portal and click on “Register” on the logon page to get started. Once you have created an account, a confirmation will be delivered to you via email. Please save the confirmation e-mail and your account information. Remember to check your spam/junk folder.

- Step 2: As part of the online application, each applicant must complete six separate tasks, which includes write-in and multiple-choice questions, as well as uploads.

With your registered account, you will be able to logon, begin your application, and revisit your in-progress application at any time by clicking on “my application”. You will be able to save your answers and revisit the individual tasks as needed and mark them as “complete” when finished. **Even if you mark a task as completed, you will be able to either reset your answers or continue to edit your answers so long as you don’t “submit” the actual application.** SurveyMonkey Apply will show you when a task is empty, incomplete, and fully completed. Once you are finished with all six tasks, we highly recommend carefully “reviewing” your application before “submitting.”

- Step 3: Each individual applicant must upload a complete “Applicant Requirements Agreement.”

Each individual applicant, and their employer, must pre-certify that they can and will abide by the Applicant requirements if the applicant is chosen for the WPI-State program. You will be prompted to upload the Applicant Requirements Agreement as its own task on SurveyMonkey Apply. This

document should be initialed and signed by both you and your employer and uploaded as a PDF. You can download the agreement [HERE](#).

- Step 4: Each individual applicant must complete both parts of the “Individual Narrative.”

You will be asked to complete the two-part Individual Narrative. All Applicants will be prompted to write in their answers for part one; for part two, applicants may choose to write in their answers in the application form, or to upload an 8-10-minute-long video. The length of the video and amount of written words are estimated to take the same amount of time and effort.

VIDEO OPTION: If you choose the video upload option, you will be prompted to link/upload your video onto the SurveyMonkey Apply portal. You may link your video using a YouTube or Vimeo account, or upload your video directly.

WRITTEN OPTION: The part two of the Individual Narrative amounts to approximately 1,150 words or about 5 pages double-spaced (this is if you use up the word limits for each question).

The questions you are required to answer in the video or portal are listed below (see “[About the Individual Narrative](#)”).

All tasks and documents must be completed and uploaded no later than 5 PM PST on Monday, August 31, 2020. Once you complete and submit the application, you will receive an email confirmation of receipt.

For more information or content-based assistance, email WPI@womensfoundca.org. SurveyMonkey Apply has their own customer support line that we **highly** encourage you to use for technical assistance. We do not take phone calls regarding the application.

Online Application Form Questions

Please review the questions listed BEFORE starting your application. Applications will be evaluated based on the thoroughness of responses to the application questions. For example, it is not sufficient to provide a one-sentence response to a section where a paragraph response is requested. Be prepared to provide the following information:

1. Your first and last name, email address, work phone number, and cell phone number.
2. How did you hear about WPI-State?
3. Have you previously participated in the WPI-Local or WPI-County program?
4. Have you ever applied to WPI-State before?
5. Because we are not taking preformed teams, do you know of other applicants who share your specific interests within the issue area? If so, what are the names of those applicants and what interests do you share?
6. What issue area are you applying under? The following are the possible issue areas to choose from:
 - Criminal Justice Reform
 - Economic Security
 - Community Health

- Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice
 - Trauma Services and Prevention
7. What are your pronouns?
 8. Can you confirm that you will be able to attend all of the [retreats and webinars](#) in their entirety?
 9. Your employer/organization name, website, county, and 501(c)3 status.
 10. Your title/position.
 11. Your office/work-related contact information (email and phone number).
 12. Is your organization a Building Health Communities (BHC) partner affiliated with The California Endowment? If so, please include the name of the BHC site.
 13. Each individual applicant must submit:
 - a. An initialed and signed [Applicant Requirements Agreement](#) as a PDF;
 - b. The two parts of the Individual Narrative as a Video or Written responses (see prompts below);
 - c. A one-page résumé.
 14. Your personal demographic information (includes questions about your race/ethnicity, whether you identify as a person of color and immigrant, sexual orientation, disability, gender, age, and experience with the criminal justice system). We ask these questions to gauge our success in our efforts to build a diverse and inclusive social justice movement in California, and all demographic information about individual applicants is kept strictly confidential.

About the Individual Narrative

For the first time in WPI's history, we are offering the option to submit the majority of the Individual Narrative as either written answers **or** as a video, with the hope that the video option will increase accessibility with our application. Depending on your decision, you will either be prompted to write in the answers to Part Two below, or, upload/link an 8-10-minute-long video. For extra safety, it's better to prepare your answers ahead of time in a google or word document and then cut and paste them into the online application form.

- Individual Narrative Part 1
 - Please provide the following information.
 - BIO: Please supply a professional bio. The bio should be one paragraph long (150-word maximum) and written in the third person. If you are selected, the bio will be published in public materials announcing the class, so the version you send us should be polished and final. Click here for an example of what we're looking for.
 - ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION: Describe the mission of your organization, including the issues the organization focuses on, the geographic reach of the organization, the demographics of the population the organization serves and the types of services the organization provides. If you are unemployed or self-employed, please contact us to discuss your eligibility. (Word limit: 150-200)
 - ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY WORK GOAL: Include a paragraph from your supervisor describing why your participation in WPI will benefit your organization/employer. Include the name, title and email of the individual making the statement. (Word limit: 150-200)

- Individual Narrative Part 2: Experience & Goals

You may write in your answers or submit a video instead where you answer all of the questions to the following six questions. If you choose to submit a video, please be sure to state which question

you are answering clearly in the video. Your video should be no longer than 8-10 minutes with minimal background noise and a clear/focused camera.

- EXPERIENCE IN ISSUE AREA: In one to two paragraphs, please describe your experience in and knowledge of the issue area under which you are applying (Community Health, Criminal Justice Reform, Economic Security, Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice, or Trauma Services and Prevention). Include information about the types of experience or knowledge you have in the sub-areas described in the section. (Word limit: 250)
- RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY: In one paragraph, share how you have been connected to the communities most impacted in your issue area. (Word limit: 200)
- PUBLIC POLICY EXPERIENCE: In one to two paragraphs, please your experience (if any) advocating with local, state or federal policymakers on behalf of yourself, your family or community. (Word limit: 200)
- PERSONAL POLICY GOAL: In one paragraph, please share how you personally intend to incorporate policy engagement into your own work as you move forward in your career? (Word limit: 100)
- COMMITMENT TO GROWTH: WPI is working to center an antiracist framework and will include sessions that reflect on intersectionality, anti-racism, and anti-oppression principles. Please share how you have navigated working in a world that is oppressive and worked to dismantle white supremacy and cis-hetero-patriarchy internally and externally? (Word limit: 200)
- PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS: WPI recognizes that the policy process and systems we are changing were designed to exclude individuals who have experienced trauma and/or oppression. Please describe how you will manage participating in a program that works with these often-oppressive institutions. (Word limit: 200)

Applicant Requirements Agreement (Required)

Each applicant should download the blank [Applicant Requirements Agreement](#), print the document, and review it with their supervisor. The form must be initialed and signed by both the applicant and employer, scanned, and uploaded as a PDF.