



ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT FOR WOMEN

Action Plan 2017-2020

Funding priorities to advance educational attainment and economic security of women and girls in Southeastern Massachusetts
Presented March 27, 2017



A FUND OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT FOR WOMEN ACTION PLAN 2017-2020



The Women's Fund's LifeWork Project, which we've incubated for the last four years, is extremely successful at helping women create economic mobility and get on a path to independence. And we are proud of that and of the women in the program. But LifeWork cannot solve the larger social problem in our region (and beyond) of women's disproportionate poverty and low incomes.

In 2015, the Women's Fund convened the Task Force on Pathways for Women to a Living Wage to help us build a collective answer to the question of how could we better support and help develop strategies to increase the percentage of women earning a living wage. We knew it would take a lot more than us alone, both to develop solutions, a plan - and to invest financial and human resources in moving it forward.

Today we are here to share a roughly three-year plan developed by community-led working groups, facilitated by a consultant whom the Women's Fund hired to coordinate seven working groups with monthly meetings.

The Economic Blueprint for Women Action Plan will put in place multiple initiatives to widen and clear the obstacle-filled, narrow pathways for low-income women up to economic stability.

They are in all the areas identified by the first year of the Task Force, which looked at the research and state and national economic initiatives for women, heard from experts and then recommended:

- Increased access to Quality Early Education & Child Care
- Equity in Employment & Benefits
- Living Wage-Focused Education & Training
- Assure Health, Safety & Well-being
- Strengthen Public Safety Nets & Stepping Stones
- Increase Women's Civic & Political Leadership

The group agreed that across the board it was critical to focus on actions that would particularly reach low-income girls and women and girls and women of color, who face the most inequity and barriers.

The Women's Fund will be committing resources to these plans as well as probably continuing central coordination of this important work. Rough estimates by Living Wage Task Force Working Group chairs of the annual cost to move these projects forward add up to approximately \$50,000, not including central coordination or measuring impact. Four projects have identified the need for a high level intern or at least part-time staffer to manage the project. Other projects need support for training, translation, events, printing, website and materials design.

We ask you to partner with us to invest in these multi-year initiatives to close the opportunity gap for women in greater New Bedford.

INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION & CHILD CARE

Provide information and resources about early education and child care to local employers to reduce the strain on working parents, and in particular working mothers.

Women provide the majority of child care in families. Faced with the option to work full time and pay for costly child care, often times working mothers will choose to stop working and stay home to care for their children. For single mothers in particular the burden of child care is especially challenging and lack of affordable child care may mean they are severely limited in their ability to pursue education and employment. Many employers, even some of best established firms, are unable to provide helpful information and resources and assist working parents in accessing child care service that would enable them to continue working and earning a living. This group seeks to provide accurate, up-to-date, and empowering information about local resources for working parents.

ACTION PLAN

The starting point for this group is to develop and provide a resource guide to a large number of employers in the area. This may be done using online and print resource guides.

After developing the packet of informational resources, this group will seek to channel information through the Chamber of Commerce directly to employers in the area. This way, a large number of employers will be able to provide information to their working parents in the workplace. At a minimum, this will help some parents learn what services are available. It will also help to educate employers and employees alike, and perhaps even ultimately bolster advocacy efforts around early childhood education and care at the state level.

Increase access to affordable childcare and after-school programming through coordinated advocacy efforts to advance legislation and increased funding for these priorities.

In order to increase access to quality early education and child care, we need greater political will to make these things a bigger priority in state and local funding.

To accomplish that, we will build stronger local advocacy around early education and child care.



ACTION PLAN

Organize ongoing advocacy efforts focusing on universal pre-k, increase in funding for vouchers, increase in state reimbursement and thus salaries for child care staff and after-school and summer programming for all.

Organize stronger joint regional participation in Child Care Advocacy Day at the State House to promote these priorities.

FOR EQUITY IN EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS

Coordinate a workers rights training for immigrant women in the area. The purpose is to contribute to equity in employment for vulnerable immigrant women workers, so that these women, who often speak other languages, will have access to information about their workplace rights in their native language.

Women make up the majority of minimum and low-wage workers with few benefits, many of them the heads of household, supporting children.

In order to be productive at work and sustain a full-time job that can lead to advancement, women need a living wage, time and flexibility to care for family, equal pay for equal work and freedom from all kinds of harassment and exploitation.

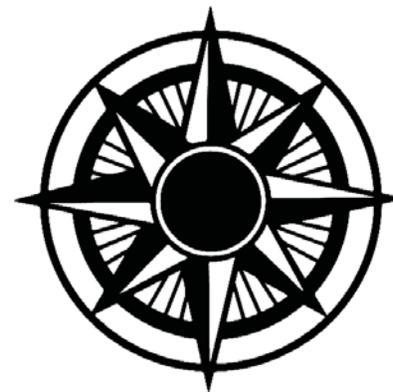
There are certain sectors of the labor market in the SouthCoast region that tend to attract immigrant labor, documented and undocumented, and those whose first language is not English. For these workers, there is a much higher risk of exploitation. This workers' rights training program will provide information about legal protections for workers, including immigrant workers.

The content will be delivered in a format that is highly accessible for immigrant women - some of the most vulnerable workers in the region, especially now.

ACTION PLAN

Workshops on workers' rights will be taught in Portuguese and Spanish by immigrant women recruited by the UMass Dartmouth Labor Extension Program, beginning with a pilot program. With funding, the UMass Dartmouth Labor Extension curriculum will be modified to include curriculum specific to sexual harassment and other workplace issues particular to women, translate materials and hire these women leaders as trainers to train other women.

By providing information on workers' rights, and the resources that they may utilize when needed, the incidents of exploitation are expected to decline substantially, and appropriate wages will be paid to immigrant workers, bolstering their economic sustainability and their buying power.



LIVING WAGE-FOCUSED EDUCATION & TRAINING ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY

Enhance girls' exposure to careers that lead to a living wage and financial literacy.

Programs such as the Junior Achievement program (financial literacy) and Girl Scouts and mentorship programs will be introduced and available to all girls.

Girls and women are graduating from high school and college at higher rates than boys, but that doesn't mean that they are getting training for living wage careers or prepared to be economically independent.

Low-income and first-generation women in higher education face many barriers to completing degrees, and women of all backgrounds are less likely than men to go into higher-wage STEAM education and careers.

Lack of access to education that is oriented towards careers that yield a living wage limits girls' and women's ability to connect to living wage career ladders.

Lack of exposure to role models, lack of exposure to STEAM and financial literacy programs and training(s) limits career preparedness in such a way that hinders economic self-sufficiency.

ACTION PLAN

Career Awareness

- Begin implementation of partnership with Junior Achievement (JA). Programming in collaboration with JA will provide access to small business owners and entrepreneurs that can participate in a Career Day/Speakers Bureau format. Focus on education for financial literacy – JA for A Day program.
- DreamWakers: connect students to working women in nontraditional (re: STEAM) careers, to include national and international speakers.
- Local Alumni Speakers Bureau: focus on females again in non-traditional careers, so as to reflect local diversity (e.g. immigrant women). Engage local organization: 'Where am I now?', local alumni group led by Justin Borges.
- Establish long term plans - 5 and 10 year plans with a focus on career awareness, education needed and what is a livable wage.

Provide access to positive adult relationships via mentorship for girls in local schools.

ACTION PLAN

Work to gain support of school administration.

- Push for professional development opportunities with an emphasis on importance of relationships (PBIS, Strengths based approaches, Crisis Prevention Institute (de-escalation strategies), Mindfulness)
- Access and build on local community programs to establish this connection to a consistent, caring adult (FabFactor, Girl Scouts, apprenticeship opportunities, e.g. Whaling Museum)

LIVING WAGE-FOCUSED EDUCATION & TRAINING POST-SECONDARY

Fortify pathways of advancement between Bristol Community College and UMass Dartmouth

BCC transfer students typically schedule their first semester at UMass Dartmouth after all other UMass Dartmouth students. This causes students to be unable to register for classes they need to graduate on time or to build schedules that fit their work needs.

Finally, a good deal of first generation college students struggle to navigate the UMass Dartmouth campus and academic standards during their first semester.

Strengthening ties between BCC and UMass Dartmouth to make it easier for community college students to seamlessly transition into a four-year university context and complete bachelor degree programs.

Implement a bridge to support student success to create more access for low income students and boost educational attainment, and thus earnings - increasing the share of local women who earn a living wage.

ACTION PLAN

In bringing together academic advisors from BCC and UMass Dartmouth, this group is facilitating a process that will synchronize prerequisite degree requirements and ensure BCC students understand the degree pathways established by articulation agreements and Mass Transfer.

Also, the collaboration will help BCC transfer students register at UMass Dartmouth in a timely fashion for the courses they need to graduate on time. Additionally, peer-to-peer mentoring from the UMass Dartmouth CAS STAR Center will help BCC students navigate the UMass Dartmouth campus and academic expectations.

Co-chairs Ana Gaillat and Jen Riley have already begun working to synchronize pre-requisite degree requirements, align the registration period for transfer students, and plan for a peer mentoring program. If BCC students require deposit assistance, investigate creating a revolving fund from Women's fund to pay deposits with students paying them back (e.g. micro loan) so students can register in a timely manner to set up schedule and courses that meet needs



SAFETY, HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Increase health safety and well-being among low-income girls and young women ages 15-21 in Greater New Bedford by engaging them in creative, collaborative programming to become more informed about sexual health, domestic violence and sexual assault, therefore reducing teenage and unplanned pregnancy, intimate partner violence, and also reducing post-sexual assault and intimate partner violence trauma.

Women who have faced trauma such as childhood abuse and domestic violence or who have unplanned pregnancies while young and without a living wage educational or career track are trying to climb the economic ladder with extra burdens.

Compared to the rest of state, New Bedford has high rates for: teen births (#7 in state), HIV, Chlamydia, lack of prenatal care, and substance abuse. While the New Bedford Family Planning program is seeing a vulnerable population reflective of its priority communities, comparing New Bedford City data shows that family planning is still very much underutilized.

Statewide, nearly 1 in 3 Massachusetts women has experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. Nearly 50% of women and 25% of men in Massachusetts have been subject to non-rape sexual assaults.

In a single day, 1,795 victims were served by Massachusetts domestic violence programs. Between 2003 and 2012, 266 victims were murdered in intimate partner homicides, and 74 domestic violence homicide perpetrators were killed.

ACTION PLAN

Specifically, this group intends to create fun and informal venues within the community where girls and young women can come for an activity or event, and where informational services will be provided.

The venues may include a nail salon or pop-up nail salon, yoga class, mindfulness and meditation session, or other activities that increase health and well-being. Staff from area agencies and volunteers will offer healthy and safe relationship as well as sexual health information and services, including STI testing, rapid testing for HIV and Hepatitis C, counseling and related community resources during the activity.

These venues will create a safe space for open conversation and questions about healthy practices, offer some limited services, and link people to services in the Greater New Bedford area. This could include making appointments for people, calling providers to ensure access, etc. A similar program was implemented in Zambia and found to be quite effective (see: <https://www.ideo.org/project/diva-centres>).

This working group has already increased access to services like family planning, connecting agencies and programs for joint outreach and linking residents to services. Expanding this model throughout areas of the city and with additional service providers has the potential for tremendous impact.

STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SAFETY NETS & STEPPING STONES

Provide greater access to legal resources for low-income women and girls and women of color.

Women who strive to pull themselves out of poverty need smart and stable supports and safety nets to reach their goal and cope with the many obstacles. A range of public programs play a critical role and should be monitored, protected, and improved.

This group focused its action planning on the obstacle of limited access to pro-bono and low-cost legal services for women seeking help on family, immigration, housing, benefits and other legal issues. Lack of access to legal resources exacerbates poverty for women in divorce and custody issues and in disputes around housing and benefits.

At present, there are not very many places where women can access current, relevant, comprehensive information about legal services resources specific to the region.

ACTION PLAN

Strengthen avenues for distribution of information about legal services and make a plan to increase actual capacity in the region to give all women equal access to justice.

First, we will identify existing resources related to legal services for low-income women in the region and compile and distribute this information. The group specifically hopes to engage numerous local organizations and share legal services resources information via these various online networks and websites.

The next phase of the work is to continue to meet with key stakeholders, UMass Law faculty and administration and legal services professionals to determine how to expand available pro-bono and low cost legal services. Specifically, we want to strategize ways to increase family law legal services for low-income women in the region.



INCREASE WOMEN'S CIVIC AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

To organize a pipeline for resources and programs that allow women to be civically engaged and develop leadership from youth to adulthood.

There are too few women in local government and other elected positions. Regionally as well as at the state and national level, women are underrepresented in elected and appointed offices. Also, the voter turnout for New Bedford is extraordinarily low. We hope to build momentum among women in our community so that more people want to become politically engaged in different ways. Our goal is to promote understanding, experience and leadership development in civic engagement ranging from voting, to School Committees and Boards to public policy advocacy, campaign assistance, as well as running for office.

By having “a seat at the table,” women will be able to better represent those issues that affect them and other women. Many times the decisions regarding women’s pay, health, maternity leave, etc., are made by (majority) men. If more women are in office, they can serve as a voice for those who often go unheard. Ideally, New Bedford will have a greater voting turnout and a bigger community presence in decision-making that directly or indirectly affects them.



ACTION PLAN

This initiative is divided into two parts: (1) a plan to create a local, accessible, and affordable training for women living in Southeastern Massachusetts interested in exploring running for elected or appointed office and (2) create more entry points, training and pathways for women and girls to become more civically engaged and develop leadership skills.

There are a number of programs that exist but take place in Boston, Providence, and western Massachusetts to name a few. By having a localized program, it addresses a prominent barrier of access and transportation.

We Can't Wait: Women in Public Service- Getting Our Seats at the Table

Our group has leaped forward to plan a three-part series for women interested in exploring running for office or supporting other women who do so. We have engaged a broad group of regional elected women at the local and state level to help plan and participate in this, as well as Shannon Jenkins, Chair of the UMass Dartmouth Political Science Department. The first forum is Wednesday, March 29 at 6:00 PM and will be followed by two others more detail-oriented on campaign and fundraising skills.

Action for Women of Southeastern MA- multiple entry points for civic engagement

Building on the work of Action for Women in Southeastern Massachusetts (AWSM), which we hope to sustain with a stipended intern or paid coordinator, utilize Women’s Advocacy day to engage girls and women in training and a highly structured, supportive trip to the MA State House and visits with legislators. Add voter registration and education components and district visits as well as coordinate ongoing advocacy and awareness on priority women’s public policy issues.

TASK FORCE ON PATHWAYS FOR WOMEN TO A LIVING WAGE 2016/2017 WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Economic Blueprint Facilitator, Trevor Mattos, the Women's Fund of SEMA

Access to Quality Early Education & Child Care

*Co-Chairs Gail Fortes, YWCA Southeastern MA and Maria Rosario, North Star Learning Centers

Pam Keuchler, Greater New Bedford Early Literacy Consortium

Titus DosRemedios, Early Education for All

Maria Pinaretta, BankFive (now retired)

Colleen Dawicki, Federal Reserve Bank

Warren Berube, South Coast Youth Alliance

Mary Ann Rogers, Martha Briggs Educational Club

Equity in Employment & Benefits

*Co-Chairs Jean Fox, MassDOT, Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women and Lisa Lemieux, 1199SEIU

Kim Wilson, UMASS Dartmouth Labor Education Center

Michelle Keith, Attorney,

Maureen Pollock, Coalition for Social Justice

Ron Rheume, New England regional Carpenters' Union

Cindy Rodrigues, Greater New Bedford Labor Council

Living Wage-Focused Education & Training

Elementary/Secondary

*Co-Chairs Tara Montembeault, New Bedford Public Schools and Brenda Pereira, Global Learning Charter Public School

Christina Turner, New Bedford Whaling Museum

Carolyn Hamel, UMass Dartmouth

Karen Nelson, Carney Family Foundation (formerly)

Louise Anthony, Women's Fund Committee member

Darlene Spencer, New Bedford Community Connections, Women's Fund Leadership Council



Post-Secondary

*Co-Chairs Jen Riley, UMass Dartmouth and Ana Gaillat, Bristol Community College (BCC)

Jennifer Menard, Bristol Community College

Stormi Monteiro, UMass Dartmouth student, BCC graduate, LifeWork participant

Janet Butler, Federal Concrete, Inc.

Marcy Wintrub, Women's Fund Leadership Council

Priscilla Ditchfield, Women's Fund Committee

Nicole Jackman (formerly of Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board)

Nan Johnson, Women's Fund Committee

Manuela Rosa, LifeWork Project

Safety, Health & Well-being

*Chair Elizabeth Tarrant, Health Imperatives

Pamela McLeod-Lima, Rebecca McCullough, and Meredith Swan, the Women's Center

Kerry Mello, SouthCoast Health System

Allison Yeats-Berg, United Way of Southeastern MA

Nicole Lacerda, North Star Community Learning Centers

Margaret Drew, UMass Law School

Connie Rocha-Mimoso, Seven Hills

Kim Ferreira, Mass in Motion New Bedford

Strong Public Safety Nets & Stepping Stones

*Chair Corinn Williams, Greater New Bedford CEDC

Jordan Pouliot, Women's Fund Committee member

Maureen Murray, Temple Landing

Elise Korejwa, UMass Dartmouth Public Policy Center

Christian Petitpas, UMass Dartmouth

Mary McCurry, UMass Dartmouth

Increase Women's Civic and Political Leadership

*Co-Chairs Jennifer Downing, Leadership SouthCoast and Rayana Grace, YMCA SouthCoast

Traci Calabrese, the Women's Fund of Southeastern MA

Beth Daley, the New Bedford Standard-Times

Mary Ellen DeFrias, SRTA

Hugh Dunn, SouthCoast Development Partnership

+Plus new expanded group planning current series to support women running for office

Everyone has a reason to run.

What's yours?

WOMEN'S FUND TIARA 5K



Women's Fund



A FUND OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Mother's Day Tiara 5K Run/Walk

Sunday, May 14, 2017

9:00 A.M. Kids Run

9:30 A.M. 5K Start

Mattapoisett

For more information or to register, visit

www.WomensFundTiara5K.com