



PARTNERSHIP
FOR WOMEN'S
PROSPERITY

Advancing Women's
Economic Security

Using a Systems Change Framework for BIGGER Results

April 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Women's Funding Network would like to thank the Walmart Foundation for its generous contribution in support of the Partnership for Women's Prosperity. It has enabled participating women's foundations to reach more women, increase our effectiveness and impact, and build a stronger philanthropic community.

The dedication of the participating women's foundations is at the heart of our success. The leaders of each of these foundations bring deep experience, expertise, and commitment to shared learning to the Partnership. We thank Lee Roper-Batker, President and CEO, and Saanii Hernandez, Vice President, Women's Foundation of Minnesota; Ruby Bright, President and CAO, and Shante Avant, Deputy Director, Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis; Jennifer Lockwood-Shabat, President and CEO, and Lauren Stillwell Patterson, Senior Program Officer, Washington Area Women's Foundation; Ana L. Oliveira, President and CEO, and Kate Landon, Director, Programs, The New York Women's Foundation; Surina Khan, CEO, and Nikole Collins-Puri, Chief Strategist of Philanthropic Initiatives, Women's Foundation of California; and Carol Penick, Executive Director, and Jamie Holcomb Bardwell, Deputy Director, Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

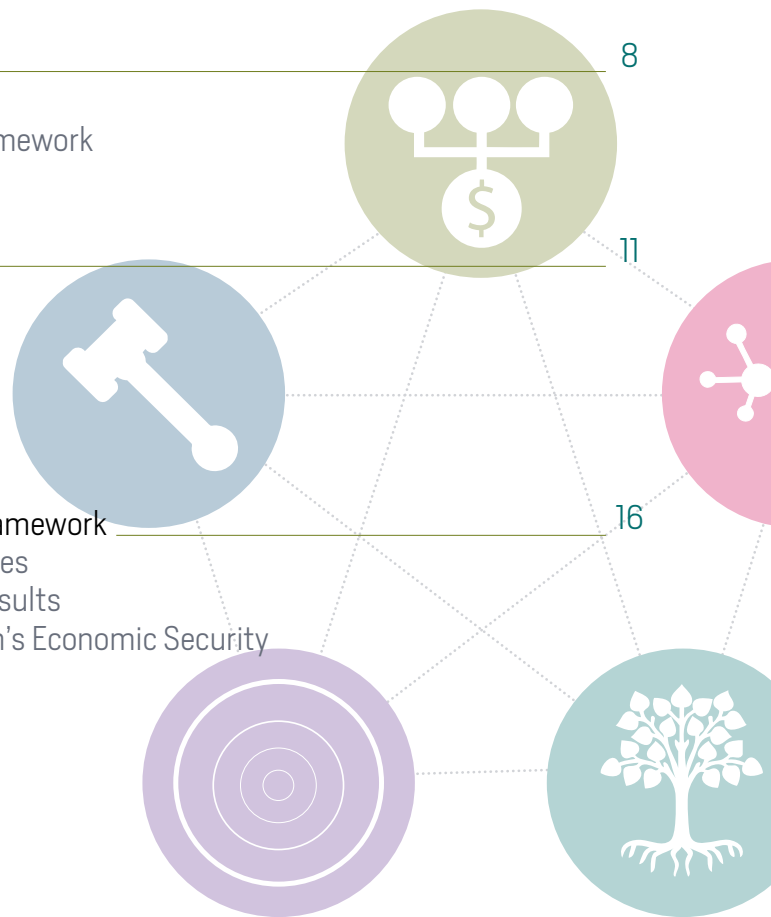
This report was written by Lisa Korwin, Principal of Korwin Consulting. Korwin Consulting is an evaluation and planning firm that advances social justice solutions by identifying community strengths, building organizational capacity, and evaluating impact. We thank Ginger Daniel for her design, writing, and contributions to this report.

We are indebted to Mariam Armisen, former Program Manager at the Women's Funding Network, who served as the coordinator of the project and provided invaluable support. We are grateful to Marcia Coné, Chief Strategist at the Women's Funding Network who is now managing and facilitating the Partnership.

Cynthia Nimmo, President and CEO, Women's Funding Network, 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today's economy is characterized by a high demand for skilled labor, inadequate social supports for low-income women and families, and the proliferation of low-wage jobs, creating a crisis among organizations, institutions, and foundations focused on building the economic security and well-being of women. Unemployment among women is high and even higher for women of color and those with limited education. Compelling evidence shows that when women are economically secure, their families are economically secure; when families are economically secure, entire communities are secure; yet many organizations lack the infrastructure and resources to accommodate the number of newly unemployed or underemployed workers, let alone the additional capacity to identify promising practices and strategies at the local, regional, or state levels.

Women's foundations across the country are working hard to meet these pressing demands. The Partnership for Women's Prosperity (PWP) was formed in 2011, bringing together six leading women's foundations and the Women's Funding Network to unleash the economic power of women in their communities and beyond. All of the PWP member foundations are esteemed connectors and educators in their communities as well as leaders in identifying and funding strategies that advance women. Together they form a strategic group to understand best practices that can be shared across the wider women's foundation landscape to positively impact issues of economic security, well-being, and empowerment for women, their families, and their communities.

To facilitate working together, PWP partners developed a Theory of Change to elevate their common goals and to illuminate both their shared and unique approaches. This process revealed that all PWP member foundations are working across multiple scales and interwoven strategies to effectively advance their work, both individually and as a collective. They benefit from thinking systemically, partnering beyond their grantmaking, and working towards bigger and longer-lasting outcomes for the women and communities they serve.

With this in mind, PWP's evaluator, Korwin Consulting, introduced PWP partners to the Systems Change Framework, an assessment and planning tool of five interconnected strategies that support organizations in advancing long-term change: Programs, Connections, Context, Infrastructure, and Scale. Together, the partners tailored the framework in order to integrate it with the PWP Theory of Change for advancing women's economic security.

Applying a Systems Change Framework to PWP's ongoing work proved to be a highly beneficial tool in their efforts. This report shares successful approaches across all five strategies and demonstrates the powerful effects of strategies that interconnect and reinforce shared goals.

Using a Systems Change Framework helped PWP partners achieve bigger results than they could have without its unifying lens. While all of the PWP partners are long-established, relatively well-resourced foundations, they each saw big gains when they used the framework to assess and magnify their work. Smaller or more nascent foundations as well as larger and more experienced foundations in the Women's Funding Network community have an exciting opportunity to apply the Systems Change Framework now to leverage their work for much bigger impact than they currently may think they can create.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S PROSPERITY

Women's Economic Security in Today's Economy

The U.S. economy today is characterized by a high demand for skilled labor, cuts in social supports for low-income women and families, and the proliferation of low-wage jobs, creating a crisis among organizations, institutions, and foundations focused on building the economic security and well-being of women. Many organizations lack the infrastructure and resources to accommodate the onslaught of newly unemployed or underemployed workers, let alone the additional capacity to identify promising practices and strategies at the local, regional, or state levels.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the 2015 unemployment rate among women was 5.2 percent. For Black and Latina women, the unemployment rates were 8.9 percent and 7.1 percent, respectively. Unemployment was highest among women with less than a high school diploma, at 9.4 percent. The rate was higher among African-American women (15.9 percent) without a high school diploma. *[Source: U.S. Department of Labor. 2015. Household Data Annual Averages. Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved April 14, 2016.]*

Today, many women are on the margins of the labor market. In order for women to compete for jobs and earn competitive wages, they would have had to begin to receive adequate training and education prior to the start of the recession in 2007. This reality, coupled with steep cuts to state and local budgets, speaks to an urgent need to coordinate efforts among those working to support women in this challenging landscape. The women's funding community must identify best practices on a regional and national level and learn across communities of practice in order to deepen impact and extend reach.

Workforce readiness programs have been developed and implemented to address and ensure that new and returning workers are prepared to enter the workforce with the knowledge, skills, and abilities requisite for success. While this is a step in the right direction, most workforce readiness programs do not adequately address a range of gender-specific barriers and obstacles women face when entering the workforce. Beyond missing a gender lens, women are further marginalized by language barriers; domestic violence or mental health issues; as public assistance recipients; as being the first generation to attend college and much more.

To adequately open training and career pathways to women, a systems approach is needed to address these obstacles and barriers and to take into account the many and layered roles and responsibilities of women outside the workplace. Women still regularly encounter myths and stereotypes about women's work, sex discrimination, pay inequity, and institutional practices that disproportionately benefit men. Meanwhile, women remain the primary caregivers for children and aging parents and continue to complete over 80% of household tasks and responsibilities. Managing the diverse roles, responsibilities, and expectations at home and in the workplace can be overwhelming and lead to workplace failure. Overwhelmingly, the gender lens is not applied when developing, implementing, and evaluating workforce readiness curricula, programs, and outcomes. Pathways to success for women in the workplace must be created by, for, and about women.

Across the country, burgeoning evidence demonstrates that women are fundamental drivers of economic growth. A vast cadre of economists have shown that a decrease in human capital strains government resources and decreases economic opportunities at the community level. Women are an untapped source of such capital; failure to address their specific needs will continue to leave them on the margins of the labor market and will consequently stunt the nation's economic potential.

The White House Council on Women and Girls' report *Keeping America's Women Moving Forward*, describes the centrality of women's role in the economic well-being of the family, community and country:



When women still face barriers to participation in the workplace and marketplace, that is not just a 'women's issue.' When women still make just 77 cents for every dollar men make, or have to pay more for their health care than men, that hurts entire families who cannot afford to lose part of their income each month. When a job does not offer adequate family leave or sick leave, that also hurts men who need to help care for a new baby or an ailing parent. When women entrepreneurs continue to have a harder time accessing the capital they need to start and sustain their businesses, create new jobs, and sell new products, that hurts our entire economy. And when approximately two million women fall victim to domestic violence each year, that costs our nation \$8 billion annually in lost productivity and health care expenses and results in the loss of 8 million paid days of work a year. The statistics are very clear: The success of American women is critical for the success of American families and the American economy. And in order for our nation to keep moving forward, women must be able to help provide for their families and contribute fully to our economy.

Women's Funding Network and the foundations it represents understand that when a woman is economically secure, her children and family are economically secure. When families are economically secure, communities are economically secure. The collective goal of the Women's Funding Network and its members is to help women with the greatest need to reach their economic potential and close the prosperity gap. Their success toward this end is good for women, good for families, good for communities, and good for business. Programs and services offered through a gender lens will address the specific needs of women entering the workforce, tapping a significant source of economic growth and potential for women, their families, and our communities.

The Role of the Partnership for Women's Prosperity

Formed in 2011, the Partnership for Women's Prosperity (PWP) is a national partnership of six leading women's foundations and the Women's Funding Network working together to unleash the economic power of all women — community by community. With the financial support of Walmart Foundation, leaders of participating women's foundations, their grantee partners, and other key stakeholders have been working together to positively impact issues of economic security, well-being, and empowerment for women, their families, and their communities. PWP supports the efforts of economically vulnerable women to gain financial and economic security through education, job training, and employment opportunities.

PWP brings together these six women's foundations:

- The Women's Foundation of California (statewide)
- The New York Women's Foundation (New York City)
- Washington Area Women's Foundation (Washington D.C. area)
- Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis (Memphis, TN)
- Women's Foundation of Minnesota (statewide)
- Women's Foundation of Mississippi (statewide)







These foundations represent some of the most well-established in the country and are esteemed connectors and educators in their communities. They are leaders in identifying and funding strategies that advance women and they form a strategic group to identify best practices that can be shared across the wider women's foundation landscape.

While these foundations are well-established, pervasive and systemic inequalities exist in each of their geographies, representing immense challenges. On the following page are key data regarding the specific need in each of their regions.

To respond to these challenges, PWP members are working tirelessly to provide the support and services women need to achieve the economic security they and their entire communities need. The following page summarizes results to date.



INEQUALITY IN NUMBERS

	CALIFORNIA	NEW YORK*	WASH, DC REGION*	TENNESSEE*	MINNESOTA	MISSISSIPPI
						
WOMEN'S EARNINGS COMPARED TO MEN'S \$1.00						
	\$0.84	\$0.87	\$0.86	\$0.82	\$0.81	\$0.77
WHITE	\$0.77	\$0.82	\$0.79	\$0.79	\$0.78	\$0.76
BLACK	\$0.60	\$0.66	\$0.56	\$0.68	\$0.59	\$0.68
LATINA	\$0.42	\$0.56	\$0.40	\$0.54	\$0.50	\$0.65
ASIAN	\$0.72	\$0.82	\$0.69	\$0.88	\$0.84	\$0.83
% OF WOMEN BELOW POVERTY LINE						
↓	17.5%	17.1%	10.6%	19.8%	12.4%	23.5%
% OF GENDER GAP IN LABOR FORCE FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 6						
	32.3%	25.7%	25.2%	26.1%	20.8%	20.2%

*Data refers to entire state, however some PWP member foundations are metropolitan area-focused.
Source: The Washington Area Women's Foundation Analysis of the 2013 and 2014 American Community Survey

PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S PROSPERITY IN NUMBERS

100
communities served
in five states and
Washington, DC



43,200
women and girls
impacted

Between 2012-2015, PWP has had a significant impact on the lives of women and girls, in the large part through grantmaking of its national partnership.

84
organizations
supported



\$7,273,000
in economic security
grantmaking

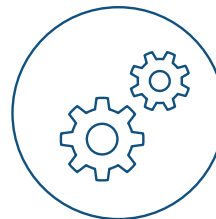
15,970
received job training

4,218
secured a job

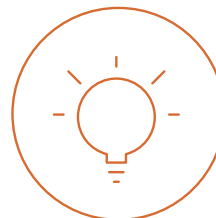
4,774
earned credits, credentials and/or degrees

11,830
increased financial knowledge and assets

5,195
completed leadership training



5 BUILDING BLOCKS
Income and asset development
Education and workforce development
Financial literacy
Benefits and work support
Quality jobs and stable employment



3 CORE STRATEGIES
Advocacy and systems level change
Capacity building and technical assistance
Direct service

EMPLOYING A SYSTEMS CHANGE FRAMEWORK

Thinking Collectively and Systemically

PWP was launched to provide a platform to discuss successful strategies across geographic areas to support one another's work. Collectively, they developed a Theory of Change to elevate their common goals and to illuminate both their shared and unique approaches: Through the development of the Theory of Change, it became clear that PWP member foundations are working across multiple and interwoven strategies to effectively advance their work, both individually and as a collective.

PWP THEORY OF CHANGE

With access to education, training and career advancement, and supportive opportunities, women and girls' economic gains will contribute more to their families, communities, employers, and economies. In addition,

- Understanding and use of financial tools will increase women's ability to create wealth, grow assets, plan for retirement, and build savings to sustain their families.
- Greater investment in successful on-the-ground strategies directed at women, especially those most vulnerable, will result in healthier and more financially secure families and communities nationwide.
- Race, class, gender, and place (rural/urban) must be considered in the design of all solutions.
- Poverty is complex. Addressing poverty requires holistic solutions involving many organizations within a larger system, including partnership with the private and public sectors.

Through the development of the Theory of Change, it became clear that PWP member foundations are working across multiple and interwoven strategies to effectively advance their work, both individually and as a collective. They benefit from thinking:

Systemically

Women's foundations represent a unique brand of transformative philanthropy and are known for delivering impact through effective coalition building and combining bottom-up and top-down strategies. Women's foundations consistently obtain high leverage beyond grantmaking by not only investing in effective programs but by engaging in a holistic approach that provides multiple layers of support to grantee partners. They engage in a comprehensive community development approach, investing in strategies that have a gender lens, empower women and girls, adapt to change, provide comprehensive and cohesive services, and turn obstacles into opportunities.

Beyond Themselves

While funding individual programs certainly impacts individual women's lives, PWP member foundations recognize that multifaceted solutions are required to address systemic problems. They understand that alone they do not have the capacity to scale and optimize infrastructure changes for broader social impact but, by working together, they have the potential to close the "prosperity gap," transforming the role today's economically disadvantaged women and girls will play in America's economic future.

Bigger Results are Possible

PWP member foundations continue to strive for deeper and more sustainable solutions to ensuring women's economic security. In response, they are actively funding effective programs, cultivating public and private partnerships, changing policies, building a sustaining infrastructure, and taking the work to scale. They continue to ask themselves these questions:

- What do we want to be different as a result of our work?
- What does it take to achieve these outcomes?
- Who needs to be engaged in the solution?
- How will we know conditions have changed for women and their families?

Introducing the Systems Change Framework

In order to learn and lead with one another across these systemic, scaled approaches, the PWP member foundations decided to explore using the Systems Change Framework to organize and examine their strategies individually and collectively. The box to the right provides a background and detail on what the Systems Change Framework entails.

Together, they reviewed the components of the framework and tailored it to address PWP's Theory of Change to advance women's economic security.

Applying the Systems Change Framework offered a great opportunity for reflection and validation for their complex work, offering a strategic lens into their various roles — as leaders, educators and program innovators, community builders, and policy influencers.

The following section represents each over-arching strategy — Programs, Connections, Context, Infrastructure, and Scale — and illuminates successful approaches each of the foundations have employed to advance women's economic security over the last four years. The examples provided represent only a small portion of the highly effective work being done within each Foundation.

NOTE: Not all work represented in this report was funded by the Walmart Foundation. Walmart Foundation funds were not used to support legislative policy advocacy. PWP members relied on a variety of resources to support their broader economic security efforts.



The PWP Community of Practice in action.

SYSTEMS CHANGE FRAMEWORK 101

The Systems Change Framework was developed by Julia Coffman in 2007 and has been used and adapted to support many organizations and initiatives since its inception.

The framework is composed of five interconnected, overarching strategies that organizations advance for long-term change:



PROGRAMS

Establishing high-performing programs and services within the system that produce results for system beneficiaries.



CONNECTIONS

Creating strong and effective linkages across system components that further improve results for system beneficiaries.



CONTEXT

Improving the political environment that surrounds the system so it produces the policy and funding changes needed to create and sustain it.



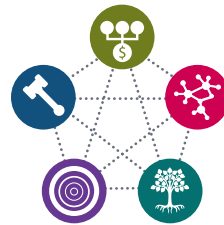
INFRASTRUCTURE

Developing the ongoing support systems needed to function effectively and with quality.



SCALE

Ensuring a comprehensive system is available to all intended beneficiaries to produce broad and inclusive results for system beneficiaries.



The PWP found that all strategies in their work are interconnected and are characterized by:

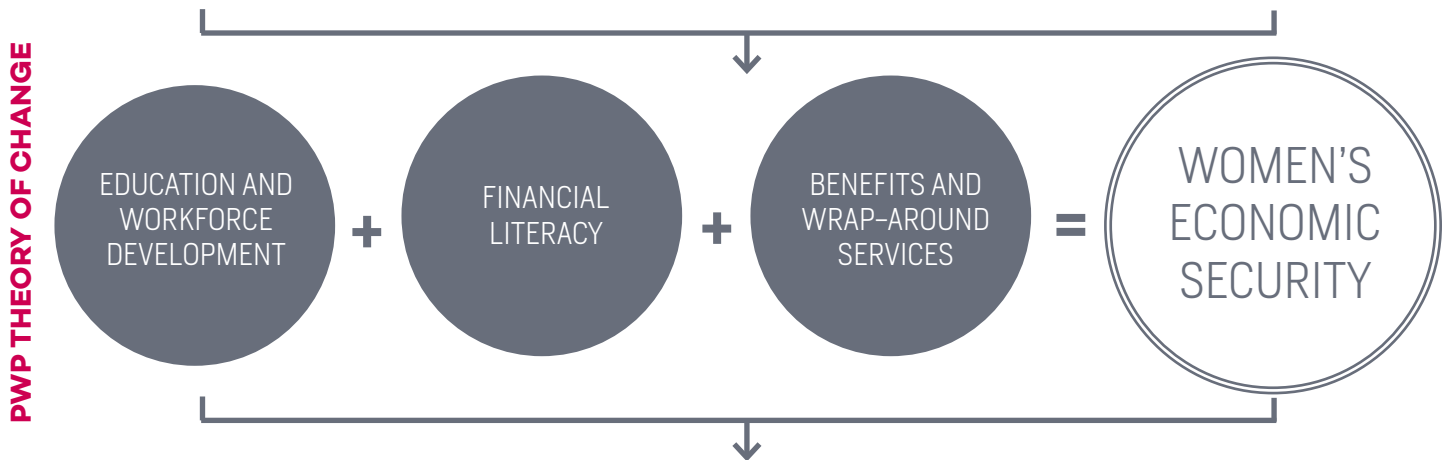
- Outcomes at multiple levels (individual, family, community, and state)
- Multiple funding streams from a range of public and private sources and decision-making structures
- Closing gaps based on race, income, culture, language, and gender
- Long-term and evolving over time in response to changing contexts

For more information, see Coffman's report: *A Framework for Evaluating Systems Initiatives*, written on behalf of Build Strong Foundations for our Youngest Children.

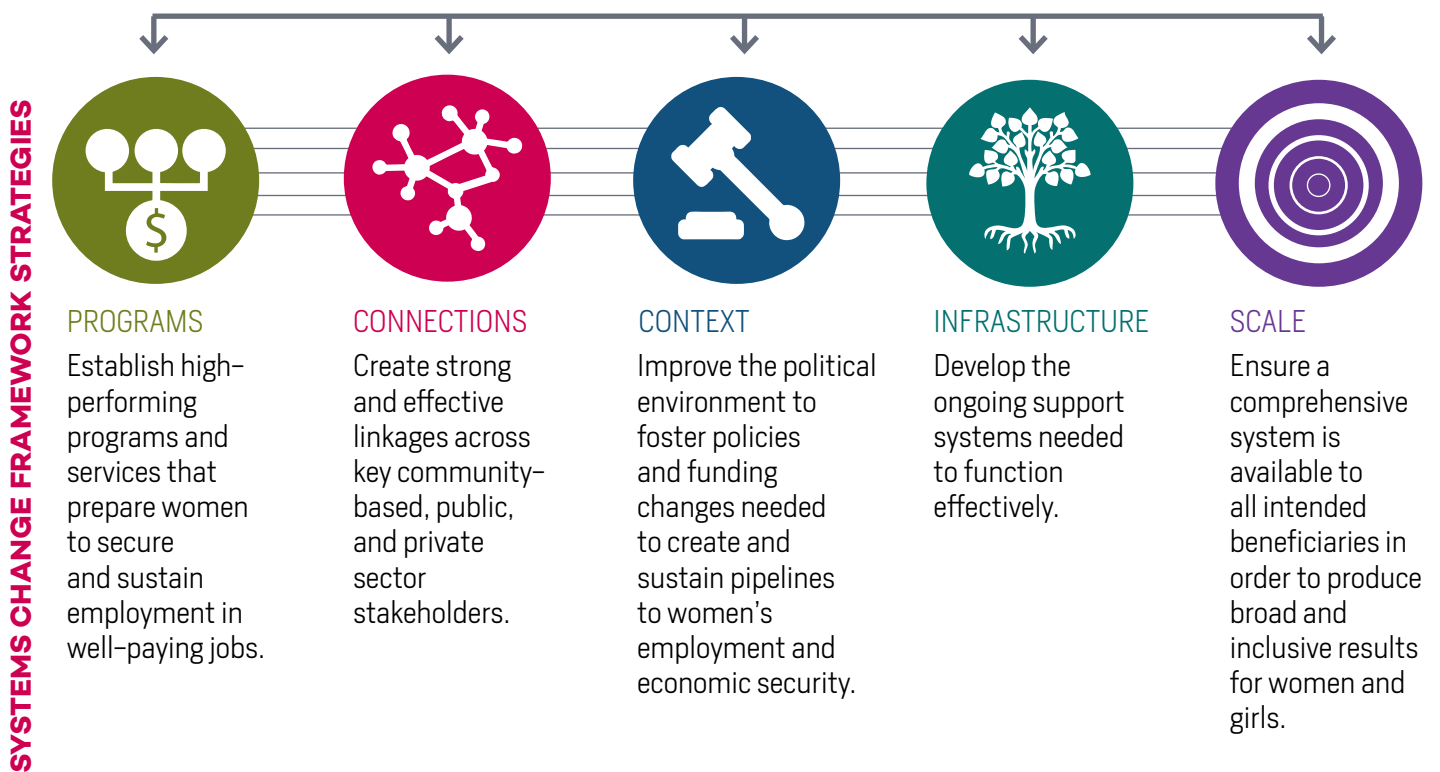
PWP Theory of Change + Systems Change Framework

The PWP Theory of Change is based on three building blocks to support women's economic security:

- **Education and workforce development:** Increase women's educational attainment level, including basic education and English literacy, as well as training opportunities for high-demand fields and occupations.
- **Financial literacy:** Provide support and education on issues related to asset building, including budgeting, credit management, IDA enrollment, homeownership, and tax preparation.
- **Benefits and wrap-around services:** Connect with, and advocate for maintenance of, wrap-around services including, but not limited to childcare, transportation, food, and housing assistance.



The PWP Systems Change Framework incorporates multifaceted STRATEGIES that are required to effectively support women in obtaining economic security.

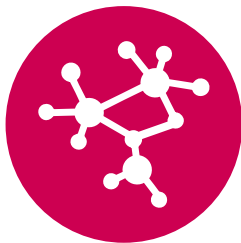


PWP SYSTEMS CHANGE FRAMEWORK STRATEGIES



INVEST IN AND REFINE HIGH-PERFORMING PROGRAMS

- Invest in, shape, and evaluate economic security programs.
- Bring a gender lens to foundation and grantee partners' economic security programming.
- Build organizational capacity through training, technical assistance, and collaborative learning opportunities.
- Use data and stories to inform practices and programs and elevate innovative programs and strategies.



LEVERAGE CONNECTIONS

- Increase visibility of women's economic security issues across sectors.
- Facilitate cross-sector partnerships to generate new understanding, support, and access to critical resources.
- Bring high-level thought leadership to discussions among funders, activists, and decision makers working to advance women's economic security.
- Establish innovative networks to connect funders, leaders and providers on important issues.
- Work with employers to directly connect training program graduates.



CULTIVATE A POLICY ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTIVE OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

- Bring the voices and expertise of women's foundations and their grantee partners to different decision-making tables.
- Collaborate with private, public, philanthropic, and social sector partners to affect changes in systems, policies, and practices.
- Fund research and make the case for women's economic security.
- Advocate for policies and practices that support women's economic security.



DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Use a gender lens to build infrastructure at community and technical colleges to address the multiple and interrelated issues impacting women.
- Tackle complex problems in partnership with other thought leaders.
- Strengthen organizations to become experts in their field to be self-sustaining.
- Engage in conversations about better data capturing and data system improvements — creating greater visibility and clarity.



TAKE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY TO SCALE

- Influence partners and other funders to use a gender lens to address issues.
- Fund the development of program models that are scalable.
- Educate public officials so that they understand how important the passage of state legislation that includes relevant, ongoing funding is to building women's economic security.

PROGRAM STRATEGIES



- Invest in, shape, and evaluate economic security programs.
- Bring a gender lens to foundation and grantee partners' economic security programming.
- Build organizational capacity through training, technical assistance, and collaborative learning opportunities.
- Use data and stories to inform practices and programs and elevate innovative programs and strategies.
- Conduct research and assess women's economic security needs.

PWP member foundations are establishing high-performing programs and services that prepare women to secure and sustain employment in well-paying jobs.

APPROACHES TO LEARN FROM

Holistic, Bridging Services

The **Women's Foundation of California** launched their Bridge to Women's Economic Security Initiative which serves women who are currently unemployed and/or underemployed in low wage jobs. Their goal is to reduce the time a low-skill, low-income woman stays in a low-wage job by funding programs and services that bridge the transition to a living wage. Their grantee partners address women's whole-life needs by providing training and mentoring, and one-on-one support and referrals, such as childcare and transportation, and adjusting training times to accommodate competing demands on their time.

Sharing Best Practices With Grantee Partners

The **New York Women's Foundation** facilitates ongoing learning meetings among grantee partners to identify innovations, best practices, integrated approaches, and systems level solutions to meet the needs of vulnerable women. The sessions are structured to draw out key learnings on a range of topics and articulate shared knowledge, facilitate new partnership opportunities, and continue to support improvements in the development of program and intervention models.

Embedding a Gender Lens

The **Washington Area Women's Foundation** reports that as grantee organizations have adapted their programs to better address the many interrelated needs of low-income women, other organizations and institutions in their region have also adapted. Over the years, they have supported grantee partners in adopting a gender lens in a particular project and watched as it was scaled and implemented across the organization. For example, grants to support community colleges' work with low-income women have spurred new and better institution-wide strategies to specifically support low-income, single mothers, leading to the development of programming to improve their education and employment outcomes.

Addressing Whole-Family Needs

The **Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis**, in partnership with Urban Strategies Memphis HOPE's (USMH), employs a two-generation approach, intentionally integrating supports and services for children and adults to tackle intergenerational poverty. USMH utilizes a Family Development Plan (FDP) to identify family needs and provide each family member with wrap-around services which may include career assessments; identification of barriers to success, such as the need for improving basic literacy skills, access to reliable transportation, quality childcare, and more — coordinating a network of over 70 service providers to provide needed services.

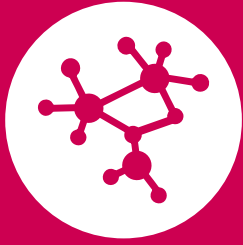
Strategic Research to Inform Programming

The **Women's Foundation of Mississippi** commissioned the Institute for Women's Policy Research to conduct an in-depth study on the circumstances and experiences of female community college students in Mississippi, the potential barriers to their academic progress, and resources that enable them to persist and succeed. The resulting report, *Securing a Better Future: A Portrait of Female Students in Mississippi's Community Colleges*, serves as the basis for the foundation's successful Access to Opportunity initiative. Grantee partners are funded to enhance career counseling and remedial education, expand and improve student supports and services, and increase access to financial support.

Focus on High-Paying Employment

The **Women's Foundation of Minnesota's** initiative Pathways to Prosperity: Building Women's Economic Opportunity increases access to post-secondary education and high-paying employment for low-income women, women of color, and women in greater Minnesota. The foundation has awarded grants to support innovative programs at community and technical colleges that create pathways for women to pursue employment in high-demand, mid-skill, and high-paying fields through training and certificate programs and workforce development. Funded programs also focus on increasing access to financial aid and other financial supports and expanding and improving student supports and services for women.

CONNECTION STRATEGIES



- Increase visibility of women's economic security issues across sectors.
- Facilitate cross-sector partnerships to generate new understanding, support, and access to critical resources.
- Bring high-level thought leadership to discussions among funders, activists, and decision makers working to advance women's economic security.
- Establish innovative networks to connect funders, leaders and providers on important issues.
- Work with employers to directly connect training program graduates.

PWP member foundations are creating strong and effective linkages across key community-based, public, and private sector stakeholders.

APPROACHES TO LEARN FROM

Leveraging Financial Partnerships

The [Women's Foundation of California](#) leverages funding and resources from industries and sectors to enhance services for women who are clients of their grantee partners' programs. They have partnered with financial institutions to fund financial literacy, coaching, and empowerment classes for the program participants to help support women as they connect to work that leads them to family sustaining wages. Financial experts have also volunteered their time to provide support and education on topics such as assets and savings, budgeting, and taxes, among others.

Interconnected Networks of Support

The [New York Women's Foundation](#) recognizes the need to partner with a range of organizations that provide complementary services, enabling grantee partners' programs to focus on working in their area of expertise while women receive seamless access to support that address their full range of needs. In an environment lacking these interconnected networks, women may be challenged to complete workforce advancement programs due to the inability to address underlying needs that influence their ability to participate, learn, and complete trainings. The foundation is funding the intentional development of organizational partnerships which create innovative solutions to a range of complex needs across multiple sectors.

Influencing the Conversation

The [Washington Area Women's Foundation](#) sits at numerous tables throughout the D.C. region to provide their expertise and bring a gender lens to the discussion. For example, the foundation's President and CEO serves on the leadership council of Raise DC, a collective impact model that is looking at "cradle to career" opportunities for youth in D.C. In this role, she challenges her colleagues on the council to analyze data with a gender lens and investigate the impact of their decisions and programming on women. This is influencing how they collect data and how they approach the overall goals of the work.

Strategic Agreements to Share Resources

The [Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis](#) has learned the importance of more effectively collaborating with the local Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in order to increase the number of low-income women benefiting from WIN services. An example has been an agreement between the foundation and WIN to designate 30 job slots to be filled by grantee partner referrals.

Leading Coalitions and Summits

The [Women's Foundation of Minnesota](#) leverages their position as a respected community foundation to bring public, private, nonprofit, and community members together to advocate on behalf of women's economic security. Critically, they supported a coalition in 2014 consisting of more than 20 partners to shape and educate policy makers about the important benefits to women encompassed in a Women's Economic Security Act. They also hosted their second Women's Economic Summit attended by legislators and advocates working in Minnesota as well as those from other states who were interested in learning about their successful model.

Bringing Gender to All Tables

The [Women's Foundation of Mississippi](#) has established a role as bringing a gender lens to every discussion and decision-making table at which they are sitting. They are raising consciousness about the particular ways different issues impact women's lives. For instance, if they are at a health meeting, they come with information about whether women have access to healthcare or suffer health inequities that affect her economic security, and they raise these issues in the meeting. If they are at a meeting regarding policies and systems change, they are ready to discuss how specific policies that are made in the state affect women's economic security.

CONTEXT STRATEGIES



- Bring the voices and expertise of women's foundations and their grantee partners to different decision-making tables.
- Collaborate with private, public, philanthropic, and social sector partners to affect changes in systems, policies, and practices.
- Fund research and make the case for women's economic security.
- Advocate for policies and practices that support women's economic security.

PWP member foundations are improving the political environment so that policies are implemented and funding changes are allocated to create and sustain pipelines to women's employment and economic security.

APPROACHES TO LEARN FROM

Prioritizing Research and Supporting Collaborations

The **Women's Foundation of California** is collecting quantitative and qualitative data from innovative workforce organizations to create a roadmap of what policies and systems should be prioritized and how to influence strategic changes within them. They also support effective collaborations to influence systems improvement. Grantee partner Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project dialogues with healthcare and safety-net providers, police departments, legal centers and others to raise awareness about the importance of cultural and linguistic access for the local indigenous immigrant community. This advocacy has improved community health and well-being for many of the farmworking women served by these partners.

Researching and Co-Authoring Legislation

Women's Foundation of Mississippi helped write a 2014 law that requires Mississippi community colleges and universities to develop a plan to address unplanned pregnancy on their campuses. According to a survey commissioned by the foundation, 38% of women report dropping out because they became pregnant, which increases the chances a woman and her children will live in poverty. To ensure implementation of the law, the foundation conducts public education to ensure that institutions of higher learning are aware of the legislation and to offer assistance in developing their plans.

Influencing the Conversation

Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis' Vision 2020 Strategic Plan is the foundation's carefully envisioned pathway to reduce poverty in Memphis. Its overarching purpose is to reduce poverty by one percent per year, over five years, in the zip code with the most dramatic poverty in the city, leveraging the most effective strategies of community organizations, agencies and grantee partners. The success of the plan is contingent upon providing women residing in the 38126 zip code with the services and opportunities they need to build a life of economic independence for themselves and their children.

Granting Strategically

Washington Area Women's Foundation supports system change efforts through support of their workforce development and asset building grantee partners, many of whom are actively engaged in advocacy work on issues including workforce training, non-traditional jobs, and institutional policy change at community colleges. For example, their grantmaking has supported community colleges in assessing how the larger institution engages and supports female students and what is contributing to (or detracting from) their success.

Integrating Policy, Research, and Grantmaking

Women's Foundation of Minnesota integrated policy, research, and grantmaking strategies to educate policy makers about the systemic issues women face. These efforts led to lawmakers' support for the successful passage of the Women's Economic Security Act of 2014. The Act includes 14 separate laws covering job protections for pregnant and nursing women, an increase in the minimum-wage, increased state funding for the Department of Education and Economic Development, and \$500,000 to establish a program to increase the number of women in high-wage, high-demand, non-traditional occupations. Through this process, the foundation has become a recognized leader among legislators and advocates within and beyond the state.

Opening Doors and Elevating Issues

The New York Women's Foundation funds policy change work of grantee partners that are experts in economic security strategies at the local, state, and national level. The foundation has also supported many organizations engaging in advocacy and policy change on economic security issues such as paid sick leave, paid family leave insurance, pregnancy accommodation, and more. The foundation acts as a convener and thought leader, hosting a series called Advancing the Agenda which brings together key stakeholders from city government to hear critical issues directly from grantee partners. Through these convenings, the foundation is able to initiate important conversations, bring attention to issues that have not received proper attention, and lift up local work and expertise.

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES



- Use a gender lens to build infrastructure at community and technical colleges to address the multiple and interrelated issues impacting women.
- Tackle complex problems in partnership with other thought leaders.
- Strengthen organizations to become experts in their field to be self-sustaining.
- Engage in conversations about better data capturing and data system improvements — creating greater visibility and clarity.

Foundations are developing the ongoing support systems needed for their economic security-building efforts to be sustainable over the long-term.

APPROACHES TO LEARN FROM

Partnering with Community Colleges

[Women's Foundation of Mississippi](#) has worked closely with the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) to illuminate the nuances of working with low-income women attending community college and to ensure their needs are integrated into job training strategies. The MCCB facilitates partnerships with community colleges and local businesses and employers to determine their training needs and partners with colleges to implement and fund the training plan.

Planning for Financial Sustainability

[The New York Women's Foundation](#) works with grantee partners to ensure that they're able to sustain their efforts once the foundation's funding ends. This includes supporting organizational growth through access to strategic planning, financial management, board development, fundraising, and strategic communications' capacity building as well as creating opportunities for increased visibility on the local, state, and national stage. They work with grantee partners to cultivate connections and invest in thriving models that are self-sustaining and position them as experts in their fields so they are sought out as thought leaders by city governments — locally and nationally.

Securing State Budget Funding

[Women's Foundation of Minnesota](#) successfully educated policy makers about the significant benefits women would realize with the passage of the Women's Economic Security Act of 2014. As a result, there are now dollars in the state budget dedicated to increasing the number of women in high-wage, high-demand, and nontraditional occupations.

Collecting Gender-Disaggregated Data

[Washington Area Women's Foundation](#) is participating in conversations with other D.C.-based organizations and agencies on how best to capture data and improve data systems, particularly gender-disaggregated data. Usually there are inconsistencies in the data collected and a lack of data sharing among relevant actors. Good data not only helps guide where to invest resources as a foundation, be it grantmaking time, staff time, or programmatic attention, but it also helps to inform broader conversations taking place among key stakeholders.

Tracking and Analyzing Interventions

[Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis](#) has recently adopted Urban Strategies' performance management system, LEARN: Learning Effective Actions to Revitalize Neighborhoods. The database is designed to track and analyze the impact of human capital programs implemented in conjunction with neighborhood revitalization and housing redevelopment efforts over time. LEARN will help the foundation understand neighborhood conditions and account for assets and needs related to human capital development.

Redesign the Labor Market

[The Women's Foundation of California](#) supports grantee partners who are actively redesigning the labor market to pave the way to living wage employment for well-trained community health workers, interpreters, home care providers, and nursing or medical assistants (CNAs or CMAs). These women bring valuable skills to the front-line healthcare delivery system, and yet they remain among the lowest-paid in the healthcare workforce. Grantee partners are innovating in multiple ways, including creating social enterprises, offering direct employment, and advocating for lasting institutional change within the health care sector.

SCALE STRATEGIES



- Influence partners and other funders to use a gender lens to address issues.
- Fund the development of program models that are scalable.
- Educate public officials so that they understand how important the passage of state legislation that includes relevant, ongoing funding is to building women's economic security.

PWP member foundations are working to ensure that a comprehensive system to support women's economic security is available to even greater numbers of women in communities throughout the country.

APPROACHES TO LEARN FROM

Replicating Successful Models

The [New York Women's Foundation](#) funds effective models that can be replicated for success across the state. For example, their grantee partner, Center for Family Life, developed an effective approach to worker cooperatives. The City of New York recognized this as an important model and opened a city office to support the development of worker cooperatives across the city. Childcare workers in these cooperatives made incomes that were 9 times bigger than the foundation's investments in the program. The workers earned more than \$1 million dollars in two years.

Thinking Beyond a Local Grantmaker Box

[Washington Area Women's Foundation](#) is exploring its role beyond their grantmaking, looking into the value of engaging in systems and policy change. They recognize that one grant can support a certain number of women and girls in a community, but advocating at larger decision-making tables has the ability to multiply those that can benefit. Being located in the nation's capital, they are also assessing how to leverage their geographic location and connect local work to national efforts.

Investing in the Big Picture

[Women's Foundation of Minnesota](#) invested strategic intellectual and financial resources into passing the first statewide Women's Economic Security Act of 2014. They developed statewide economics research on the status of women that served as the basis for each bill, hired a top-rated lobbyist, provided thought-leadership throughout, and met small appropriation and matching-fund needs to ensure success.

Leveraging Partnerships for Bigger Investment

[Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis'](#) economic development partnership with the Walmart Foundation paved the way for the City of Memphis' Housing Authority and Urban Strategies Memphis HOPE, a WFGM grantee partner, to receive a \$3.2 million HUD grant to continue their work with residents in the Foote Homes low-income housing development. The JobsPlus initiative provides innovative job training, job placement, and entrepreneurship opportunities designed to prepare low-income individuals—particularly single female heads of household, and mothers re-entering the workforce in Memphis—with pathways toward careers.

Expanding Access by Increasing Demand

[The Women's Foundation of California](#) champions grantee partners working to increase demand and employment opportunities for low-income, low-skilled workers throughout California. One grant partner, Goodwill, Serving the People of Los Angeles County, is now pursuing licensing as a Licensed Vocational Nurse Training Center to better position women to earn higher level skills and wages. Additionally, they plan to expand access by implementing evening and weekend training classes. This will make a considerable impact in the community for participants with additional opportunities to work towards economic self-sufficiency.

Sharing Knowledge and Best Practices

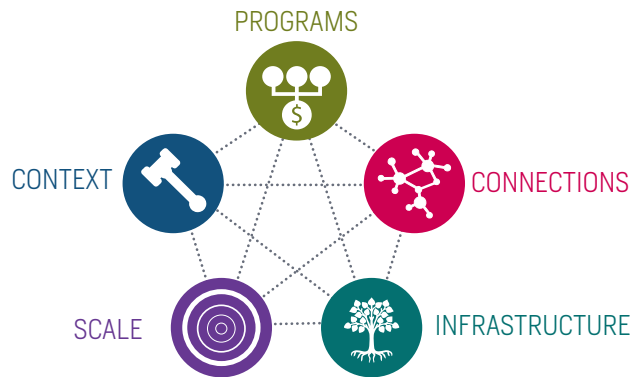
[Women's Foundation of Mississippi](#) is working to increase knowledge-sharing among community colleges about how to replicate and expand successful support programs that assist low-income women to achieve post-secondary credentials and eventually a living-wage job. They are also working with community colleges, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and local health care facilities on best practice models to help students access free and low cost health care on or near their campuses.

THE VALUE OF USING A SYSTEMS CHANGE FRAMEWORK

The Interconnectedness of Systems Change Strategies

Applying the Systems Change Framework to PWP's ongoing work provided a critical lens for strengthening their efforts. As the examples in the preceding section for each strategy show, many of the successful approaches were both interconnected and interdependent. For instance, connections-based work amplified policy-focused work; infrastructure-based work was the backbone to scaling. The interconnected nature of these strategies is an important facet of systems change work.

Highlighting the links between the Systems Change Framework strategies offers a holistic approach to addressing complex challenges. A focus on each strategy reveals the interdependency of all work efforts to reinforce, deepen, and leverage successes for bigger, more sustainable results. This means a bigger impact by the foundation in the form of bigger impacts in the lives of women on the city, state, and nationwide level.



Understanding the strategic relationships and leverage points between these strategies provided valuable insight for PWP partners. The **Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis** leveraged the interconnected strategies of the Systems Change Framework to enhance their efforts. In partnership with the City of Memphis and the Memphis Housing Authority, the foundation applied and successfully secured a HUD HOPE grant and launched Memphis HOPE, a public-private partnership that provides comprehensive, personalized case management services for families from the targeted HOPE VI communities. The foundation successfully led efforts and raised \$7.7 million over five years to provide a new model for comprehensive case management, Community Supportive Services (CSS). The CSS component was necessary to ensure the Memphis HOPE program provided viable means and expandable approaches to neighborhood revitalization, while improving the standards of living for community residents.

This work created greater visibility for the foundation and positioned them within the community and beyond as an important leader with this program model. The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis is the first women's foundation to lead a national model for a community supportive services program that focuses on family sustainability and economic self-sufficiency for current and former residents of urban housing developments. The foundation is now sharing the model with other foundations and municipalities across the country to replicate this work.

This foundation's successful leadership established its reputation and opened doors to sit at decision-making tables across the city and state to design and assess key programs that affect women. This included an invitation for the foundations' CEO to sit on the mayor's Blueprint for Prosperity's Task Force, an ambitious policy initiative to reduce poverty in Memphis from 27% to 17% in ten years through an intensive focus on increasing prosperity across the city. With this seat, the foundation has played a seminal role in ensuring that major economic investments create opportunities for women's economic security. For example, a large new employer was coming to town and planning to build a new factory in an isolated area. This worksite would be difficult for women



The girl's basketball team Memphis HOPE's Lady Warriors Exposure program which encourages young women through sports to graduate from high school and aspire for secondary education.

and especially low-income women — often the primary caretakers of their families, with tasks and responsibilities such as child care and essential errands — to get to. By sitting on the Task Force, the foundation was able to generate strategies to increase the number of jobs that could be accessed by women, ultimately establishing a new bus route to the job site.

The interconnected strategies of programs, connections, context, scaling, and infrastructure all served to create a strategic platform for success for the foundation and for the women and families they serve. The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis intends to continue to apply the Systems Change Framework to see how they can leverage and augment existing successes to achieve bigger results for more women across their city, state, and beyond.

Applying the Systems Change Framework, the **Women's Foundation of Minnesota** saw a need to have effective models of programs that could be scaled to the state level. As an experienced grantmaker, they knew that funding individual programs is an important way to innovate and incubate, but these programs needed to be well tested for the state to scale and institutionalize successful programs. They worked with grantee partners to demonstrate success and to show that scaling their programming to the state level could have a deeper effect.

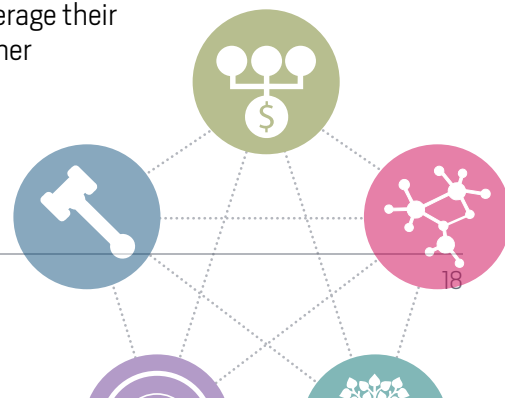
The foundation sits at many different tables where they work successfully as connectors. For example, they were part of a funders' group addressing African American poverty that historically had only looked at the impact on men, but with the foundation's leadership, the group now includes women in its analyses. Similarly, they sat on a workforce funders group and a childcare funders group that had not used a gender lens until they got involved. The foundation's leadership as connectors positioned them well to bring multiple stakeholders together to form a coalition that was central to exploring and ultimately supporting a policy solution to help address some of the many inequities and barriers Minnesota's women face. Using the lens of the Systems Change Framework, they knew that they had real assets in place to position themselves well for this work; they were held in high regard, and respected by many who were committed to building women's economic security in Minnesota. Moreover, their leadership as connectors positioned them well to bring multiple stakeholders together to form a coalition that was central to achieving the passage of the state's Women's Economic Security Act in 2014. The landmark passage of this statewide legislation was a product of thoughtful work across all System Change Framework strategies, each reinforcing one another.



Lee Roper-Batker, Foundation President and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota on the signing of the Women's Economic Security Act of 2014 on Mother's Day, May 11, 2014.

Due to the foundation's excellent leadership and strong history of successful work on behalf of women's economic security across the state, the foundation would likely have been successful in its economic security work without applying the Systems Change Framework, but foundation leadership found that by assessing their strengths and opportunities in each of the strategies — and recognizing how successes with each strategy were intrinsically linked — they were better able to organize and deepen their efforts. They intend to continue to use the Systems Change Framework to evaluate and assess their work going forward, acknowledging that it proved to be an invaluable tool for them to think bigger — and get bigger results.

These are just two of many examples from the six PWP partners. As individual foundations and as a group, PWP partners have used the Systems Change Framework as a vital assessment and planning tool to support their work. Often, it validated the innovative and effective work they were doing and offered additional ways to leverage their success. This learning process demonstrates that there are real opportunities for other foundations across the country to apply the Systems Change Framework to dramatically increase the impact of their work.



Applying a Systems Change Framework for Bigger Results

PWP partners benefitted greatly from applying the Systems Change Framework to achieve bigger results. While all of the PWP partners are long-established, relatively well-resourced foundations, they each realized big value in using the lens of the framework to assess and enhance their work. Smaller or more nascent foundations, as well as larger and more experienced foundations in the Women's Funding Network community, have an exciting opportunity to apply the Systems Change Framework to leverage their work for much bigger impact than they may currently believe they can create.

This report strongly encourages other foundations to apply the Systems Change Framework to their work to advance women's economic security. Whether launching a new initiative or refining an existing one, this framework provides a structure in which to ensure that the different strategies at each level have the greatest impact. Here are some questions for foundations to consider:



PROGRAMS

What support do women in our community need to achieve economic security? What programs currently exist? What programs are still needed? How will we know if these programs are effective?



CONNECTIONS

Who are the key stakeholders within our community that have an interest in and/or are in a position to influence the resources, programs, and policies available to support women's economic security? What funder groups exist? Are there coalitions within our community addressing certain aspects of economic security? What role might we play in helping to influence the agenda and ensure that a gender lens is brought to these discussions?



CONTEXT

What policies are needed to advance women's economic security? Are these local, state or national? What decision-making tables might we sit at?



INFRASTRUCTURE

What infrastructure is currently in place to support women's access to training, services, and well-paying jobs? Are there public agencies charged with workforce training? Are there existing funding streams that might be expanded to include a focus on women? Is there adequate infrastructure, such as transportation, housing, and childcare, to support women? Are there other supports needed to ensure that existing systems are able to function effectively and with quality?



SCALE

What would a comprehensive system look like that could reach all women in need of support to achieve economic security? What efforts might we engage in to take this work to scale? Do new policies need to be passed to fund new and expanded programming? Are we in a position to share what we know with other women's foundations and other stakeholders to increase the ripple effect of our work? What financial partners — philanthropic, corporate, individual, and public — do we need to bring to the table to invest in these economic strategies which impact the entire community?



Home health care workers from Homebridge, a grantee partner of the The Women's Foundation of California, and their Work Life Coach. These coaching services provide a holistic approach to workforce training, creating a foundation for women's long-term success.

Current and Future Challenges for Advancing Women's Economic Security

Employing the Systems Change Framework alone does not remove the entrenched barriers to women's economic security. There are still many political, cultural, and resource-based barriers that require attention from legislators, funders, and advocates alike. Looking through the lens of the Framework is strategic, as the success of advancing women's security is dependent on successful and interconnected advances across all five strategies. This final section articulates challenges facing those working to build women's economic security, and invites deeper thinking and resources to be channeled strategically towards addressing these challenges for this issue to be adequately addressed in the near and long term.

PROGRAMS



PWP member foundations are unique in their ability to invest in innovation, provide capital, and take risks to solve deeply rooted problems in new ways. They are discovering that the best programs are ones that include multiple, wrap-around approaches that serve entire families and tap a system of services. These highly successful investment strategies require ample and flexible financial resources but often donors are only willing to invest in traditional strategies or single-focus solutions that are simple to evaluate. Foundations and their grantee partners need the trust and flexibility to use dollars in the ways they know to best test, implement, and monitor complex program models.

CONNECTIONS



Across all PWP initiatives, connections are key to advancing the work, both with others specifically focused on women's economic security and with leaders addressing intersecting issues. PWP is a strong example of a thoughtful, well-funded opportunity to support learning between foundations, informing strategic financial investment across all six. However, this opportunity has not yet been available for other women's foundations who may greatly benefit from this shared learning — as PWP has. Additionally, foundations have demonstrated that hosting summits and other types of issue-based convenings within their communities of influence (be they city or state-based) are critical opportunities to educate allies and partners to advance their work. These gatherings require financial sponsorships and donors' understanding of the multiplier effect of opportunities for connection.

CONTEXT



Today's political climate is universally acknowledged to be a divisive one and, unfortunately, women's economic security is rarely acted upon thoughtfully during such politically polarized times. Ensuring that women's economic security remains a vital conversation topic at all levels of decision-making requires strategic advocacy, consistency, and a focus on the long haul. Financial resources and capacity are necessary to stay in front of legislators to lay the groundwork to take action when opportunity and timing align.

INFRASTRUCTURE



A key tool in securing women's economic security is the ability to share data on the current status of women and projected impacts of certain interventions. More often than not, data that is collected is not gender-disaggregated and do not show the variations of experiences and impacts on men and women. High-quality, gender-disaggregated data across organizations and municipalities are arguably the most powerful drivers for change, and yet funding for data collection is often under-resourced or overlooked in favor of more program-based or high profile investments. Data gathering needs to be prioritized and funded with a long-term commitment for multi-year collection and analysis.

SCALE



There is no time to lose for women, their families, and entire communities when it comes to investing in women's economic security. The impact of building or deteriorating women's economic security has powerful ripple effects on the health and well-being of every U.S. citizen and globally. Thinking in terms of isolated program initiatives or separate geographic areas cannot serve the immediate and long-term needs of our communities. Successful programs need to be adapted, tested, and rolled out in similar communities; city-scale conversations need to be moved to the state level, state-wide conversations must be brought to the national stage. This takes big-picture thinking and the financial resources to ensure that women's economic security is recognized as a keystone strategy to social change. We must think and act bigger for BIGGER results.