

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Four Key Successes

- 1) Ninety-one percent (91%) of girls **believe in themselves** and that they can accomplish whatever they set out to do.
- 2) Ninety-five percent (95%) of girls believe it's important to **delay pregnancy** to be economically successful.
- 3) Ninety percent (90%) of girls **graduated** from high school and **95%** enrolled in **post-secondary** education.
- 4) Majority of girls **see the connection** between **supportive environments** and **economic readiness**: **96%** say supportive, caring adults matter; **95%** say supportive environments help them feel safe; and **85%** say older girls are good role models and mentors.

What Girls Need to Be Economically Successful

For low-income girls of color and rural girls in Minnesota to become economically ready and successful when they are adults, the data show girls need:

- Mentors who care.
- Knowledge and self-esteem to avoid risky behaviors.
- Leadership development.
- Career development.
- College preparation and enrollment.
- Focus on academic achievement.
- Financial literacy.
- Activism for women's economic equality.
- Cultural and community awareness.

Key Recommendations

- 1) **Ensure girls' skills match their aspirations.** Strengthen skills in making post-secondary education, career choices and financial literacy.
- 2) **Continue to emphasize planning for a child** in girlsBEST programming; measure teen pregnancy in girlsBEST programs and compare to statewide rates per ethnicity and geographic region.
- 3) **Tighten overall educational and post-secondary enrollment focus across all girlsBEST programs:**
 - Make sure girls' high aspirations are matched with equal knowledge of how to navigate college prep and enrollment process, know their post-secondary choices and education needed for specific careers.
 - Increase college tours and workshops in number and percentage of girls reached.
 - Ensure all girlsBEST sites track high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment.
 - Assess impact of tracking educational indicators on non-academic program tracks.
 - Increase percentage of sites offering opportunities; consider breadth and depth of programming.
 - Increase percentage of girls who feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues with other girls (now at 76%).
 - Increase mentoring by professional men and women (79.8%) and women leaders; and focus mentoring on academics, college prep and careers.
 - Ensure parents, girls and mentors understand expectations and responsibilities of mentoring relationships.
- 4) **Adopt a new strategic direction for girlsBEST.**
 - Focus girlsBEST Fund programming on post-secondary enrollment, and measure girls' academic achievement and post-secondary enrollment across all girlsBEST programs to improve girls' economic readiness.

Differences in Programming for Girls' Economic Readiness

Greater Minnesota

MENTORING: Critical for rural girls, who often feel isolated due to out-of-home placement, poverty and violence.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS: Caring adults help organize and control the environment, so girls have the space they need to succeed.

PROGRAM FOCUS: Strong focus on advocacy, in particular advocacy around domestic violence and school change.

RACIAL DIVERSITY: Mostly Caucasian.

Metro Area

MENTORING: Impacts girls' academics, especially mentoring focused on girls' academic achievement, preparation for post-secondary education, and careers.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS: Girls are exposed to women of color as role models and mentors, including site mentors, professional women and women leaders in the community.

PROGRAM FOCUS: Strong focus on academics and its connection to mentoring in overall programming.

RACIAL DIVERSITY: Mostly girls of color.