Foundation Releases New Economics Research on the Status of Women and Girls in Minnesota

Poverty, Wage Gap, Occupational Clustering Biggest Barriers to Women’s Economic Security

MINNEAPOLIS – (Jan. 30, 2014) – The Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, in partnership with the University of Minnesota Humphrey School’s Center on Women & Public Policy, released new Economics-focused research today on the status of women and girls in the state. The research is available at WFMN.ORG.

“We know that for women in our state to achieve economic security, women must first have economic opportunity, including access to education and training, good jobs, and childcare. This will improve the lives of women and of all Minnesotans,” said Lee Roper-Batker, president and CEO of the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota.

According to Roper-Batker, the data reveal that the greatest barriers to economic security are poverty, the wage gap, and occupational clustering.

Minnesota’s female-headed households are more likely than other family configurations to be in poverty. Since 2000, there has been a 64 percent increase in the number of families with children below the poverty line. This is important, because working mothers in Minnesota are increasingly the primary breadwinners in their families.

“Regardless of education, age, or race and ethnicity, the wage gap continues to prevent Minnesota women and their families from receiving their fair share,” said Roper-Batker.

According to the research, all full-time working women earn less than white men. White, Asian American, African American, American Indian and Latina women earn $0.80, $0.74, $0.62, $0.62 and $0.57 on the dollar, respectively, compared to white men. Women with disabilities and women who have lived in the U.S. six-10 years earn $0.61 and $0.58 on the dollar, respectively, compared to white men.

“Occupational clustering also contributes to the wage gap, threatens women’s economic security and stability, and compromises the productivity of Minnesota’s economy,” said Roper-Batker.

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of Minnesota’s white men work in sales, office and service compared to 63 percent of African American, 62 percent of American Indian and 57 percent of Latina women.

“At the Women’s Foundation, we know that the strongest grantmaking and policies to improve the lives of all Minnesotans is data driven. This research served as the basis for the Women’s Economic Security Act, introduced today by state House Speaker Paul Thissen,” said Roper-Batker. “We applaud House Speaker Thissen and all legislators who will carry the Act forward this session, and we call upon all Minnesotans to support it.”

To view/download the Economics research, visit WFMN.ORG.

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About the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota
The Women’s Foundation of Minnesota is a statewide community foundation that invests in social change to achieve equality for all women and girls in Minnesota. The Foundation funds innovative social change programs, advocates public policy, publishes annual research on the status of Minnesota’s women and girls, and builds women’s philanthropy. It is the oldest statewide women’s foundation in the country.

About Status of Women & Girls in Minnesota
Launched in 2009, Status of Women & Girls in Minnesota is an ongoing collaborative research project of the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota and the University of MN Humphrey School’s Center on Women & Public Policy. Annually, data specific to Minnesota women and girls is gathered and analyzed in economics, safety, health, and leadership.

The project represents a unique approach to research by using a gender-race-geography-equity lens. Experts from academia, government, nonprofit and private sectors, elected bodies and philanthropy participated in working groups and reviewed data on women and girls in Minnesota to identify the key issues outlined in the research, and proffer solutions.

The data reviewed and included here comes from published reports produced by government agencies and nonprofits, and original gender-based analysis of publicly available datasets (primarily the American Community Survey).