

2017 Annual Report

Women's Fund of Rhode Island



The mission of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island is to invest in women and girls through research, advocacy and strategic partnerships designed to eliminate gender inequity through systems change.

2017 Annual Report

As the new Executive Director for the Women's Fund of Rhode Island (WFRI), I arrived just as the 2016 Presidential Election was happening. WFRI is a feminist organization interested in leveling the playing field for women and girls in Rhode Island, and so we were disappointed in the results of the election. This set the stage for 2017, giving us a renewed sense of mission. Our focus for this past year was about the importance of investing in women and girls, with our advocacy focused on:

- Earned sick time and increasing the minimum wage
- Reproductive access and freedom
- Affordable child care options for low income families through tiered rate structure

Our events for 2017 addressed these issues, beginning with the release of our latest research on working women our state and the barriers they face on the path to financial success. We introduced our popular Cocktails and Conversation networking events, featuring panel speakers with innovative ways to improve the status of women and girls. Our Women Leading Change Celebration included a keynote presentation by Jackie VanderBrug, internationally renowned speaker on the topic of Gender Lens Investing. We saw the passage of the Healthy and Safe Families and Workplaces Act, which gave over 45,000 RI employees up to three days of earned sick leave, many of them mothers who would otherwise lose a day's pay to care for a sick child. 2017 also brought a return to grant making, with \$50,000 distributed amongst six Rhode Island organizations addressing gender equity issues.

Of course, none of what we accomplished in 2017 could have happened without the support of our Board of Directors, volunteers and donors. Thank you for your generosity of time, talent and treasure! We look forward too many more accomplishments in 2018 with your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Nevins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kelly" and last name "Nevins" clearly distinguishable.

Kelly Nevins
Executive Director
Women's Fund of Rhode Island

Advocacy

THE WOMEN'S FUND OF RHODE ISLAND BELIEVES IN CREATING SYSTEMS CHANGE, SO THAT WE CAN TRULY CREATE GENDER EQUITY IN OUR STATE. OUR ADVOCACY WORK IS CRITICAL, TURNING IDEAS INTO LAWS, CITIZENS INTO LAWMAKERS AND OBSERVERS INTO DOERS. WFRI ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION IN 2017:

ADVOCACY

The Women's Fund of Rhode Island believes in creating systemic change, so that we can truly create gender equity in our state. Our advocacy work is critical, turning ideas into laws, citizens into lawmakers and observers into doers. WFRI actively supported the following legislation in 2017:

The Healthy and Safe Families and Workplaces Act

H5413/S290 - This Act became law in September and will provide up to three earned sick days to over 45,000 Rhode Island employees who previously did not qualify for paid time off, many of whom are working mothers.

The law allows employees of companies with 18 or more employees to accrue a minimum of one hour of paid sick and safe leave for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of 24 hours per year in 2018. For a typical family without paid sick days, even a few unpaid days away from work can jeopardize their ability to pay bills or meet basic needs. For example, just 3.5 days of lost pay is equivalent to the monthly grocery budget of a typical family whose breadwinners lack paid sick days. And that assumes a breadwinner is able to return to work after taking the time away. Unfortunately, too often, people lose their jobs when they have to take time away from work. Nearly one in four adults in the US report that they have lost a job or been threatened with job loss for needing time away from work to address personal or family illness.

Tiered rate structures for Child Care Assistance

H5775 - Although this bill did not pass, establishing a tiered rate structure for child care assistance would ensure that quality and affordable child care options are available to low income families. Current rates do not enable child care programs to attract and retain qualified staff and exacerbates the gender wage gap, since many child care providers are themselves women or work for women owned businesses.

Increases in the Minimum Wage

H5057 - The typical worker earning the minimum wage is an adult woman and about 75% of minimum wage workers are over the age of 20. 42% of families are headed by a single female parent, many of whom work full time bringing in earnings of less than \$15,000 per year. Raising the minimum wage reduces child poverty and benefits the broader economy. With an increase of \$1 to the minimum wage, low wage worker households spend an additional \$2,800 in the following year. We are pleased that Rhode Island's minimum wage will increase from \$9.60 to \$10.10 in 2018 and we will continue to support the concept of a fair, living wage for low income workers.

Fair Employment Practices, including banning wage history requirement for jobs

S583 - According to the Association of American University Women, 40% of the gender wage gap can be considered discriminatory. This discrimination starts as women and men begin their careers, with women making less in the same role as men right out of the gate, when family caregiving responsibilities haven't even begun. By not allowing wage history to determine a company's wage offer, women have an opportunity to start at equal footing with their male counterparts in any job they take at any time of their career. Rather than using wage history, their new wage will be based on objective criteria such as experience and skill. Furthermore, wage range transparency helps all employees to better understand their opportunities for growth.

- **H5435** - Repealing prohibition on health insurance coverage of abortion for state employees
- **H5486** - Allowing full year prescriptions for birth control under state health insurance requirements
- **H5830** - Repealing unconstitutional language in our General Laws requiring spousal notice for abortion

RESEARCH

WFRI engages in original research to understand and highlight the status of women and girls. Our goal is to provide unbiased information that can be used to address issues of gender equity. In 2017, we released the Status of Working Women in Rhode Island report and summary infographic. Insights included:

- RI has the second highest proportion of women in the labor force in the nation representing 49% of the state's labor force, compared to Delaware, which was number one with 59%
- Nationally, 41.4% of mothers are the sole family breadwinners
- The median earning of Rhode Island women is \$30,137
- 36% of women are working part time, but challenges prevent many from finding full time positions

The full report can be seen at <http://www.wfri.org/research>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WFRI conducted seven events engaging over 600 participants, including:

- **Making Work Work for Women** community input forums (3) focused on sharing the results of our latest research and inviting community feedback
- **Women Leading Business and Labor**, in partnership with Senator Jack Reed, highlighted how the business and labor community are addressing issues of workplace equity
- **Womenomics: Women Leading Change**, featuring speaker Jackie VanderBrug and a discussion on Gender Lens Investing
- **How Female Entrepreneurs Are Innovating in the Workplace**, featuring women led businesses and how they are changing the workplace
- **Creating Systems Change for Women and Girls** (2), highlighted innovative strategies for addressing equity issues in RI

We also conducted a Social Media Campaign, raising community awareness and participation through our #UNselfie Gender Equity campaign and regular postings to all social media sites.

WFRI was represented through its staff and volunteers as keynote speakers at more than a dozen events, and participated in seven televised interviews.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Conducted two workshops engaging 75 participants:

- **Run As You Are** taught women how to run for office, with two thirds of participants indicating they planned to run for office within the next five years
- **Growing Workplace Diversity to Amplify Success** addressed unconscious bias in the workplace

GRANT MAKING

2017 represented a return to grant making for WFRI after a 3 year hiatus. We granted \$50,000 to six organizations addressing gender inequity in RI, including:

- **Young Voices**, to support the #RaiseOurVoices leadership training program for high school girls
- **RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence**, to support "RI Move to End Violence" training and collaborative activities for organizations addressing domestic violence
- **Center for Women & Enterprise**, to provide entrepreneurship training in Spanish to local women
- **Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education**, to support the "Hidden Lotus Girls Circle" program, teaching girls to develop caring relationships and self-esteem while advocating for themselves
- **Day One**, for their "Be Empowerment" program to help young survivors of commercial sexual exploitation heal and forge a new path with their community.
- **YearUp**, for their Providence Women in Information Technology Careers program

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

WFRI actively participated in strategic partnerships through collaborative planning processes and lobbying legislators for change.

- **Prosperity Together** (coalition of national Women's Funds addressing economic issues through grant making)
- **Coalition for Reproductive Freedom**
- **Earned Sick Time Coalition**

Other Accomplishments:

- Raised \$56,595, an increase of 52% over the previous year
- New donors increased by 89%
- Moved into new office space location on East Side of Providence, making the space cost effective and easier for volunteers to engage with staff

PRIORITIES FOR 2018:

- **Support for Fair Pay Practices**, including banning requirements for historical wage information, creating transparency in wage ranges and increasing the minimum wage*
- **Support for Reproductive Freedom**, including codifying Roe vs. Wade legislation in Rhode Island law
- **Freedom from Sexual Harrassment**

LIST OF 2017 BOARD MEMBERS:

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Owner, Elaine Blais Coaching

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Senior Director of Investments, Vanech Group

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FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS

New England Women's Policy Initiative
Providence Plantations Club Memorial
The Loring Wolcott & Coolidge Charitable Trust
McAdams Charitable Trust
Rhode Island Foundation
The Trimix Foundation

CORPORATE SPONSORS

\$1000+

10,000 Small Businesses
Alex and Ani
Amica Insurance Company
Bank of America/U.S.Trust
BankNewport
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Cox Communications
Hinckley Allen
Pawtucket Credit Union

\$100-999

AAA Northeast
Aaronson Lavoie Streitfield Diaz
Bentley Foundation
BlumShapiro
Center for Women and Enterprise
Citrin Cooperman
Collette
Delta Dental of Rhode Island
Girl Scouts of Rhode Island
Independence Bank
J. McLaughlin
Partridge Snow & Hahn

DONORS

\$750+

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Carmen Diaz
Cindy DiPietranntonio
Aram Garabedian
Aronda Kirby
Daria Kreher
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse

\$5-749

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Kristi Agniel
Roberta Aaronson
Kimberly Ahern & Jenna Lafayette
Kim Arcand
Zankhana Bateman

Elaine Blais
Danielle Bouchard
Nancy Carriuolo
Lucia Case
Carley Chambers
Mary Clark
Elizabeth Colt
Diane Crosby
Deborah Culhane
Mary Daly
Judith and Murray Danforth
Elda Dawber & Mariellen Langworthy
Diane DeCosta
Cheryl Ethier
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Nick Figueroa
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Rita Gewirz
Lana Glovach
Michelle Gonzalez
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Paula Silva
Mary Sorrentino
Mary Ellen Sorrentino
Norma Staley
Penney Stein
Ezra and Varda Stieglitz
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Thompson
Paula Twidale
Augustus Uht
David Vanech
Michelle Vitale
Anne Wales
Jessica Walsh
Alison Walter
Jessica Wang
Karen Weavill
Lee Wheaton
Beverly Wiley
Judith Zimmer

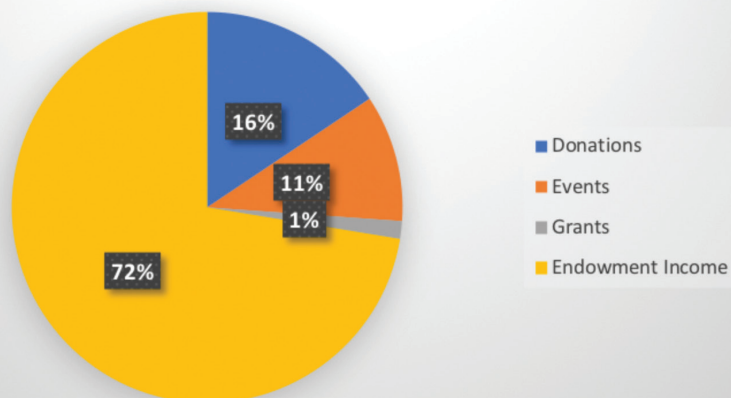
IN-KIND GIFTS

Accessorize with Maybeth
All that Matters Yoga & Holistic Health Centers
Avon Cinema
Badge Bomb
Blithewold Mansion
Breathing Time Yoga
B to B Certificates Sunset World
Campus Fine Wines
Castle Hill Inn
Coastal Extreme Brewing Company
Cindy DePetronio
Coffee Exchange Ltd.
DeQuattro Restaurant Group
Foursight Graphics, LLC.
Frog and Toad
Gail Ahlers
Giraffes and Robots
Howley Bread Group, Ltd.
Kreatelier
La Gondola
Morins Catering and Events
Mystic Aquarium
Newport Vineyards
Olio Advertising
Pawtucket Red Sox
Pizza J
Revival Brewery
Seven Stars Bakery
Stock Culinary Market
Trinity Repertory Company
Twirl the Girl
Uriel Caspi
Wara Wara
West Side Sewing Studio
Whole Foods Market
The Wilds Agency

SPECIAL THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS INCLUDING:

- Denise Barge
- Sierra Barter
- Gretchen Bell
- Margaret Benz
- Jennifer Borman
- Patrice Carroll
- Liana Cassar
- Christina Castle
- Becky Costello
- Allyson Cote
- Ginnie Dunleavy
- Joan Dwyer
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- Kathy Gagne
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- Lori Giuttari
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- Meghan Hannon
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- Lauren Lemoi
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- Ellen McNulty-Brown
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- Hannah Tessitore Hazelton
- Brigit Timpson
- Lauren Tutuny
- Jackie VandBrug
- Carol Windover
- Kira Wills
- Meg Wirth
- Marianna Zotos

2017 Total Income = \$205,144



2017 Total Expenses = \$198,548

