



WOMEN'Sfund
RHODE ISLAND

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



The mission of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island is to invest in women and girls through research, advocacy, grant-making, and strategic partnerships designed to achieve gender equity through systemic change.



A Message from our Executive Director



Like many organizations and businesses, we started 2020 with a plan that needed to be recalibrated due to the concurrent health, economic, and racial equity crisis that followed. As women navigated home-schooling, family care, and working from home (if we had that ability), our progress toward closing the gender wage/wealth gap has gone in reverse. Meanwhile, there was new recognition by many that racism is alive and well in our country.

WFRI pivoted early in the year to address the ongoing “she-cession” that significantly impacted women of color. Since then, we’ve focused on advocating for a broad portfolio of responses that address women’s economic security, health, and safety for families and ensuring women are at the table where decisions are made. We increased our grant funding to our community partners, committing to two years of funding for our grantees, and focusing on projects whose primary beneficiaries are women of color. Although this organization has always recognized the intersectionality of gender gaps, staff, board members, and WPI fellows/alumni underwent anti-racism training and worked on anti-racism strategies for the organization to follow in years ahead.

It’s been a challenging year, and yet WFRI continues to thrive through the support of our WPI fellows and alumni, staff, volunteers, board members, donors, and partners. What will we be able to accomplish in 2021? We’ve got plans to grow our programs next year so that, together, we can make an even more systemic impact. Thanks to people like you, Rhode Island’s women have more champions working on their behalf!

Sincerely,

Kelly Nevins
Executive Director

What We Do

Our work lays the foundation for a more equitable Rhode Island and has made our state a national leader in public policies that are good for women and families.



\$60K

Given in grants focused on gender and racial equity



32

Hosted 7 Cocktails & Conversations, featuring 32 women leaders on feminist topics



250

Women trained in financial wellness, self-advocacy, running for office and voter registration

Advocated for:

RI Parentage Act, Increases to Minimum Wage, Fair Pay, Safe Voter Access, Source of Income Discrimination, Nursing Home Staff & Quality Care Act and Raise Revenue RI



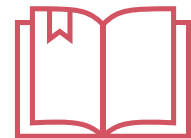
31

Women trained in grassroots advocacy through our Women's Policy Institute



3

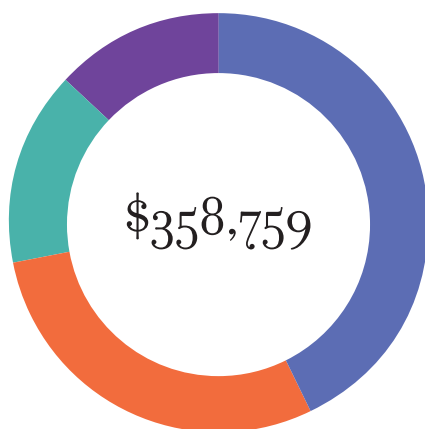
Awards achieved, including Secretary of State Medallion Award, PBN Social Service Sector Industry Leader & PBN Nonprofit Champion for Diversity & Inclusion



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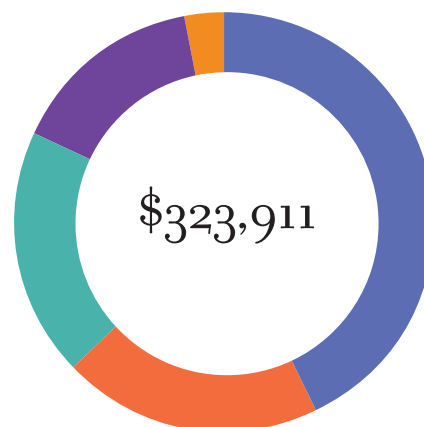
Research reports produced, including The Uneven Path and Census of Nonprofit Directors & CEOs

2020 INCOME



Endowment:	43%
Grants:	29%
Events:	15%
Donations:	13%

2020 EXPENSES



Programs:	43%
Fundraising:	20%
Grant Allocations:	19%
Operations:	15%
Research:	3%

STAFF

Kelly Nevins, *Chief Executive Officer*

Ellie Brown, *Director of Development and Operations*

Paula Hodges, *Women's Policy Institute Consultant*

Gabrielle Bargeon, *Intern*

Andrea Gustafson, *Intern*

Daniella Habib, *Intern*

Brynn McGlinchey, *Intern*

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Women's Funding Network

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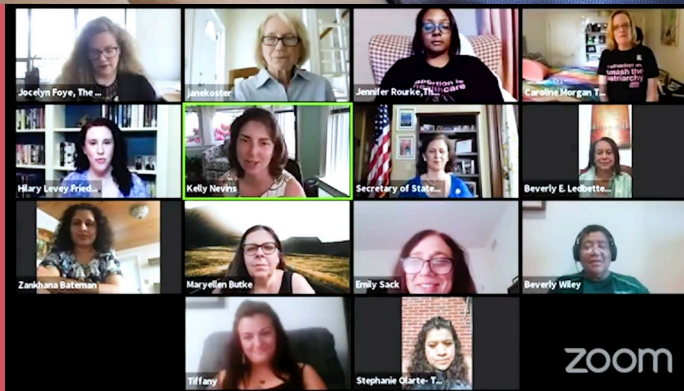
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Ashley Wright

“I don’t think women today realize how important groups like yours are. Thank you for all you do.”

Lisa G., Rumford



“WFRI is paving the way for a more equitable Rhode Island and creating a model for every state in the U.S.”

Kathy M.



Grant Making

Women's Fund of Rhode Island (WFRI) grant program recognizes that many of society's problems have a more significant impact on women and girls. There is an undeniable correlation between poverty, low self-esteem, poor health and inadequate healthcare, job access and wages, domestic violence, sexual assault, and being female.

Our participatory grantmaking funds projects and initiatives that use a "gender lens" to focus on women's and girls' unique needs and provide gender-specific solutions to problems facing women and girls in Rhode Island, with a particular interest in projects that lead to system change.

In 2020, we increased our grantmaking by 12%. In recognition that women of color, particularly Black women, experience inequities at a higher level, this year's two-year grant cycle prioritized women of color as funding beneficiaries.

\$60,000 IN GRANTS WERE MADE TO:

RI for Community & Justice

Creation of a Young Women's Equity Coalition, designed to provide pre-professional DEI field training and peer support for young women of color in our state and connect them to adult mentors in the field.

SEIU Education & Support Fund

Funding for the training of 30 family child care providers who provide care for children enrolled in RI's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Based on the All Our Kin philosophy, the program is designed to provide the best practices in business and financial management for family care providers.

RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Creation of an Advocates of Color Leadership Development to Advance Economic Justice initiative, which will enhance and strengthen women of color advocates' leadership skills, provide aspiring allies with training and tools to assess capacity to hire and sustain people of color employees and increase the number of advocates of color engaged in policy advocacy related to economic justice.

Sojourner House

Continuation of funding for Peer Advocacy Zones and preventing intimate partner violence for youth in middle and high school in Cranston and Providence.

SISTA Fire

Continuation of funding to address the maternal health crisis that Black women, women of color, and their children face within RI by building grassroots leaders focused on maternal health justice.

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

Continuation of funding support for the RI Coalition for Reproductive Freedom to protect and advance reproductive health care access through advocacy and legislative action.

Grantee Spotlight – SISTA Fire

At the center of our work, SISTA Fire believes in creating space for in-depth interpersonal and leadership development for women/womxn of color between 18 and 30. We provide a 13-week leadership and political education training that embodies Transformative Justice.

The framework develops members' analysis of systems of oppression through their lived experiences, utilizing a popular education approach, skills building, and centering healing and spiritual practices. SISTA Fire holds a deep belief in investing in young womxn of color's political and leadership development. Andrea has taken advantage as one of our participants in the training we've offered our general members. She leveraged the skills she gained and is now organizing and engaging the community around immigration and deportation with AMOR and other groups, something she is passionate about. She is also now a paid organizer for the Working Families Party.

To learn more about SISTA Fire, visit <https://sistafireri.org>.



Women's Policy Institute

We were proud to have relaunched our Women's Policy Institute in 2019. That cohort of Fellows, our largest class ever, split into two groups to work on housing discrimination based on the type of income and a more general women's equity group. Both groups were working on legislative campaigns when COVID hit and shut down the RI legislature. Although the program ended in June, the group continues to advocate for change on various issues, attending marches and canvassing for candidates.*

Our 2020 class, the most diverse cohort of WPI ever, began meeting in September. Our pivot to virtual programming has required us to reconfigure the program, but so far, participants report they are learning valuable strategies and building meaningful relationships to be successful advocates. This class has focused on supporting Doula legislation for the entire cohort and is actively working in coalition with advocacy leaders of color.

*Note: WFRI is a nonpartisan organization that does not endorse candidates.



“Joining WPI validated my desire to run for office and provided tools necessary for me to begin that process. I am now aware of the legislative process and can use the knowledge to continue advocating and lobbying for important social issues.”

Raquel P., Rehoboth.

“I feel like I have friends under the dome, which is enough to feel more confident in my abilities. Entering a space that many women have expressed concerns about has been particularly difficult for me. Doing this work as a group of empowered women has made me feel less alone. I plan to run for office now!”

Alyson P., North Providence

21%

of our 2019-2020 WPI Class said they are leaning towards running for office in the next election.

29%

of our 2019-2020 WPI Class said as a result of the program; they planned to run for office in the next five years.

“WFRI staff and board members realized that its gender equity focus should include both gender and racial equity. This year, our staff and board participated in anti-racism training and created an anti-racism strategy that will be used in the years going forward.”

Beverly Wiley, Board President, Women’s Fund of Rhode Island

Honors

Secretary of State Medallion Award

Providence Business News, Kelly as Social Service Sector Industry Woman of the Year

Providence Business News, Nonprofit Champion for Diversity & Inclusion





Advocacy

While continuing to focus on economic security and access to reproductive health & freedom, WFRI expanded advocacy efforts to include access to safe voting in 2020.

We were pleased to help pass the RI Uniform Parentage Act, which ensures equality for LGBTQ+ parents so they can establish their parentage like other families and provides a clear standard for courts to resolve competing claims of parentage. We also helped pass the Safe and Healthy Voting Act, expanding access for voters to mail in ballots and early voting.

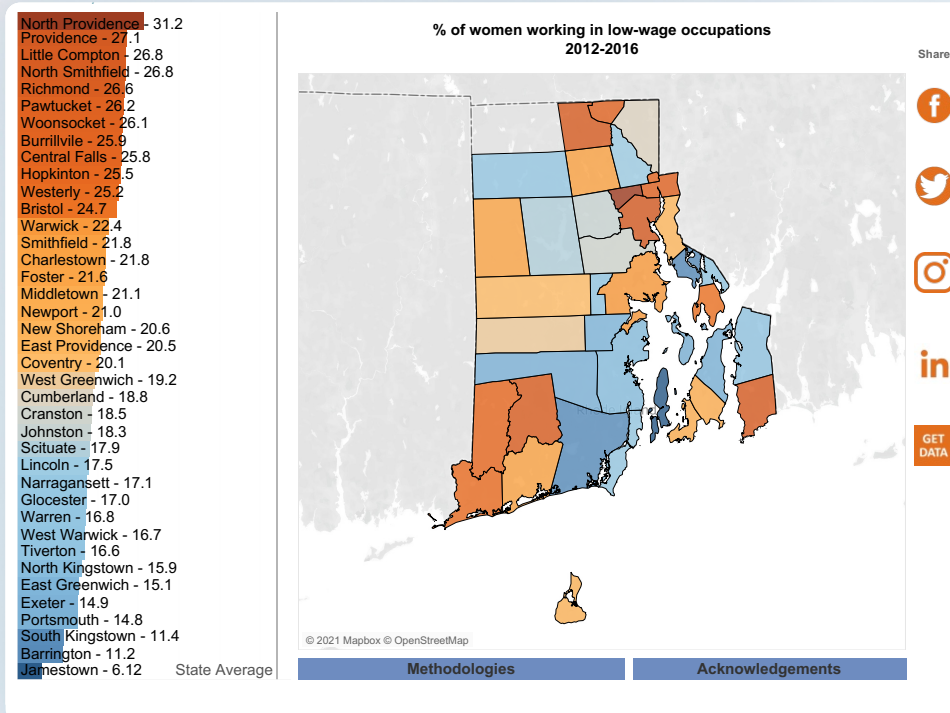
Also advocated for:

- Increase to minimum wage
- RI Early Educator Investment Act
- Nursing Home Staff & Quality Care Act
- Mail Ballot emergency balloting, early voting
- Source of Housing Income Discrimination
- Fair Employment Practices
- Codifying ACA provisions in RI Health Insurance Coverage
- DHS budget support for Child Care Assistance & Head Start
- Budget Article 14, Section 5(b)- Perinatal Doula Services
- National Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Coronavirus Aid, Relieve & Economic Security (CARES) Act
- American Opportunity Accounts Act

Coalitions we partnered with:

- Closing the Women's Wealth Gap
- Coalition for Reproductive Freedom
- Raise the Bar on Safe Staffing
- Revenue for Rhode Island
- RI COVID Response
- Right from the Start
- Voting Access Coalition
- #WeDemandMore

Research



RHODE ISLAND WOMEN'S WELL-BEING INDEX

Staff and dozens of volunteers worked on an ambitious online tool that measures how women fare in Rhode Island using the following dimensions: Health, Personal Safety, Employment & Earnings, Economic Security, and Political Empowerment. The index is available live on our website, along with policy recommendations tied to the data. The Rhode Island Women's Well-Being Index is Rhode Island's first centralized source for women's data and will be updated whenever new data becomes available. wfri.org/rhode-island-womens-well-being-index/

VOLUNTEERS

Amy Acompora
Lorne Adrain
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Yasmeen Abdul Azeem
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Connie Worthington

“I love being part of this organization as a donor and volunteer.
Keep crushing it out there, WFRI.”

Jessica B., Foster.



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