

Office on the Economic Status of Women

Issue 1 April 2015

In This Issue

- **Director's Message....1**
- **Diversity in the Capitol Restoration project1**
- **2015 Legislative Overview2**
- **Recap of the 2015 Women's Economic Security Summit2**
- **Resources, Research & News4**

Message from the Director

One of the first things OESW's predecessor, the Council for the Economic Status of Women, did when it was established by the Legislature in 1976 was send out a monthly newsletter. Volunteers, many of them retired women, would come to the CESW office once a month and address, stamp and mail the paper newsletter. We don't have the very first issue, but did find a cut-and-pasted Newsletter #2, dated December 1976. It had a notice of a public hearing on displaced homemakers and an article on the gender pay gap in state government. (In 1976, women in state government were paid 69¢ for every \$1 males were paid.)

Well, "we've come a long way, baby"! Or have we? Thanks to Minnesota's 1982 state government pay equity law, women in state government now make 89¢ for every \$1 male state employees make. Yet women are still leaving the workforce temporarily or permanently, or taking part-time jobs, because of family caregiving responsibilities, and that affects their lifetime earnings. Over half of Minnesota's older women don't have enough retirement income to meet basic needs—a result of a lifetime of making less than men.

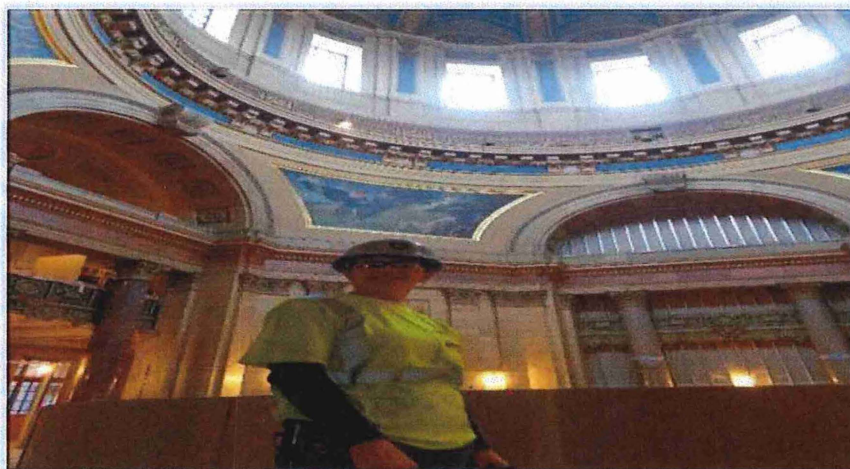
And...we are restarting the OESW newsletters, which were discontinued in 2003. Only this time around, we'll send them by email.

The purpose of the newsletter will be to provide information to legislators, legislative staff and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues. Each issue will have a headline article, overviews of interesting recent research and articles, and links to resources. Our hope is soon to feature articles by women throughout Greater Minnesota talking about women's economic issues in their part of the state.

Please send us your suggestions. barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn

Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women

Capitol Restoration Contractor Exceeds Hiring Goals for Women & Minorities



Angela Heikkila, Electrical Foreman for Gephart Electrical, working on the Restoration Project

2015 Legislative Overview

By mid-March, 2,016 bills had been introduced in the House and 1,882 bills in the Senate. Historically, only about 4% of the bills introduced ultimately become law. Minnesota has a two-year legislative cycle, consisting of two regular sessions and possible additional "special sessions." OESW scans every bill that is introduced to see if it impacts women's economic status. We watch those bills that have a significant economic impact on women, sometimes providing legislators with background information and research, sometimes making sure appropriate organizations and individuals in the community are aware of the pending legislation.

Here is an [overview](#) of selected bills that the OESW is following this session.



"Historical," is an adjective that captures the January 29, 2015, Minnesota Women's Economic Security Summit. The **Voices of Indigenous and Immigrant Women and Women of Color** session brought us the strong and wise voices of women from Minnesota's African American, Asian American, Latina, and Liberian and Somali communities. You could hear a pin drop in the packed hall as these women spoke proudly of the accomplishments of their communities and the economic and cultural benefits they bring to the state. Legislators took note as the panelists identified what policies were needed to help their communities prosper.

In the **Caregiving** session, a small business owner spoke about the importance of respecting women's roles as both caregivers and workers and stated that she sees her employees as such a valuable asset that she makes sure her workplace fully supports their caregiving responsibilities.

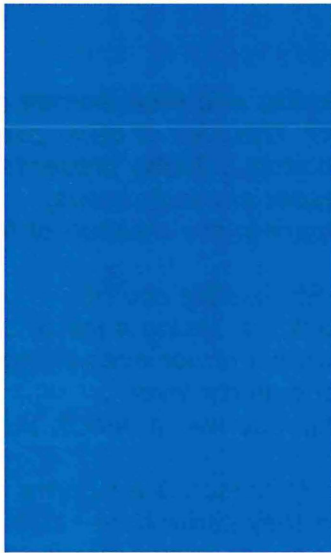
The **Transportation** session reframed the legislative transportation discussion in terms of the transportation needs of women and low-income families. Minnesotans, especially in rural areas where public transit may not be an option, need a reliable and affordable car to get to work. Women's caregiving role was linked to transportation needs—women need to get to work, take their children to day care or after school activities, transport their aging parents to medical appointments, and buy the groceries. "Making cars move faster on the main streets of our communities does not meet the complex needs of women."

Check out [the OESW website](#) for videos of each Summit session and session fact sheets.



Heard at the Summit:

- *Usually, solutions are designed for women of color, and then women of color are called and asked, 'What do you think?' This idea of other people developing solutions for women of color has to stop.... Today presents an opportunity to include all Minnesota women, especially indigenous, immigrant and women of color, to fully participate in the creation of their future.*
- *The lack of paid leave forces families to make impossible choices: choosing to stay home because they, or their child...is sick, vs. losing a job or pay.*
- *There is no economic security to working full time and not even being able to raise your family income level to the federal poverty level....*
- *It used to be that having Spanish as a first language was a deficit, but now it is an asset. That changes the narrative.*
- *The Liberian community adds at least \$22M to Minnesota's economy.*
- *Although Somalis faced many challenges when they came here—cultural differences, language, religion, racial biases—I am so proud that if you go to South Minneapolis you will see many storefront businesses started by Somali women who are trying to bring in income for their families.*
- *Minnesota's Asian American community is very diverse, representing over 42 ethnic communities coming from over 50 countries.*
- *Magnify all concerns voiced by other panelists by about 10 for the African American community.*
- *Minnesota's black women have been the backbone of keeping the family together. We're resilient. We're on the curve now; the fresh air is coming in.*
- *The goals and hopes of [black women] are similar to every ethnic background: We want our children to graduate high school. We want livable wage jobs. That should be a right, not a 'hope and dream.'*
- *Paid sick leave would make a huge difference for millions of [working] Americans who are caregivers.*
- *No topic is more central to women's economic security than caregiving.*
- *Transportation isn't just a women's issue; it is a civil rights issue, because it affects the black community—the largest users of public transit— much more.*
- *Women who caregive for their loved ones are 2 ½ times more likely to live in poverty when they are old than women who do not.*
- *Many Asian cultures have a cultural value of filial piety: a sense of duty to respect, obey and care for parents and elder family members. If you do not take this responsibility, you are stigmatized; you are not looking after your parents like you should.*
- *Policies that are good for women are also good for men, and they're good for kids and for families and for our economy.*



*Alzheimer's is a woman's disease;
60% of Alzheimer's caregivers
are women.*

(Senator Carla Nelson)

RESOURCES, RESEARCH & NEWS

Resources

New Forms for Divorcing Parents

Effective February 3, there's a new *Joint Divorce With Children* module in the state's I-CAN! online form system. This new module also includes language/questions that are compatible with same-sex marriage.

For more information about the new module, visit [the MN Judicial Branch Self Help Center](#) (OESW thanks [Call for Justice, LLC](#), for providing this information.)

Legal Services State Support Talks about "Fact Sheets"

Each month, Legal Services State Support (the electronic arm of the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition) puts out "Tech Tips." This month's "Tip" relates to the 2015 Fact Sheets found on [LawHelpMN.org](#)—fact sheets that are perfect for attorneys and the public alike. As a collaboration

between the Education for Justice Program (E4J) of MMLA (Mid Minnesota Legal Aid) and State Support, [LawHelpMN.org](#) offers fact sheets on a variety of legal issues, all of which are written in language that is easy to understand, and are available for download and distribution.

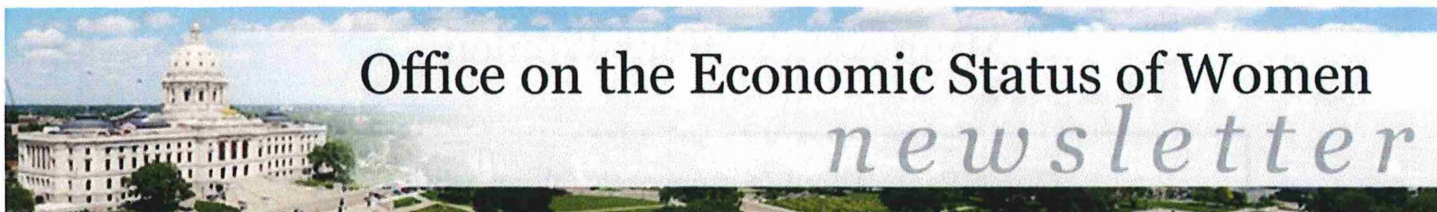
To learn more about how to access these Fact Sheets, we encourage you to visit [Legal Services State Support](#)

Research

According to the Census Bureau's latest figures on poverty, U.S. women are hit hardest in every category. [More....](#)

The gender divide in Higher Ed.

"Where are all the women in Higher Education?" Women are 1 in 4 college presidents, 29% of full professors, 40 out of 254 chief executives of public universities and public colleges. What can be done to reach a better balance? [More....](#)



In This Issue

Director's Message	1
Quick Facts about Minnesota's Older Adults.....	2
Older Women's Gender Wage Gap	2
Women's Earnings by Age Group	2
Older Women & Occu- pational Segregation .	3
Importance of Social Security to Older Women.....	3
Older Women & Work.	3
Legislative Overview (May 11, 2015).....	4
ERAMN	5
Resources, Research & News.....	5



Message from the Director

Today's older woman has a foot in two worlds: she is a product of the sexist conventions of her youth, but lives now in a culture molded by the forces of feminism and modern ideas of women seeking higher education, being economically independent, and having successful, high-powered careers. Today's older women made education and early career and life decisions when American society was still grounded in traditional gender-role models, setting a career trajectory that often adversely defines their careers and economic status today.

And that economic situation isn't rosy. As OESW's new status report, [Older Women & Poverty, 2013](#), details, 1 in 15 Minnesota women age 65 to 74 live in poverty; 1 in 9 women age 75 and older. Women age 75-plus are almost twice as likely as men to be in poverty. Another new OESW report, [Older Women & the Basic Cost of Living, 2014](#), documents that the cost of meeting basic necessities of life for a Minnesota elder is almost \$23,000, yet the median income in retirement of Minnesota's older women is \$18,000.

As is so often the case, this sad economic portrait is even worse for older women of color. About 1 in 5 of Minnesota's Black or African American women age 65 and over live in poverty.

In my perception, I often separate our older women into two basic groups: those who either choose not to are in too frail health to work and the "young-old"—those who are in good health, physically and mentally, and often willing to and capable of holding a job.

This newsletter issue is aimed at those "young-old" women. Earned income is a critical economic need for many older women. They need to work well past the retirement age. Don't underestimate their ability to do challenging, demanding work. Grey hair does not translate to lost brain cells.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues.

Please send us your suggestions. barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn or visit our [Facebook Page](#) or [Twitter](#)

P.S. A special thank you to Tracey Van Haaften, Reference Librarian with the Legislative Reference Library, who, out of the goodness of her heart, is helping us with newsletter formatting and design.

Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women

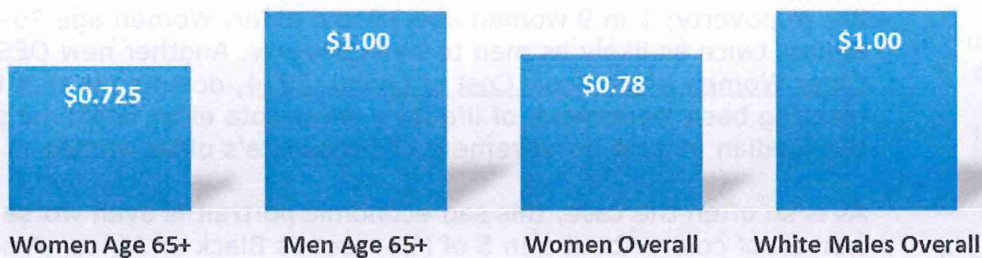
Minnesota's Older Women

Quick Facts About Minnesota's Older Adults

- About 285,000 Minnesotans will turn 65 this decade—greater than the past four decades combined.
- Around 2020, there will be more Minnesotans age 65+ than there are children in K-12, for the first time in history.
- By 2030, more than 1 in 5 Minnesotans will be older adults.

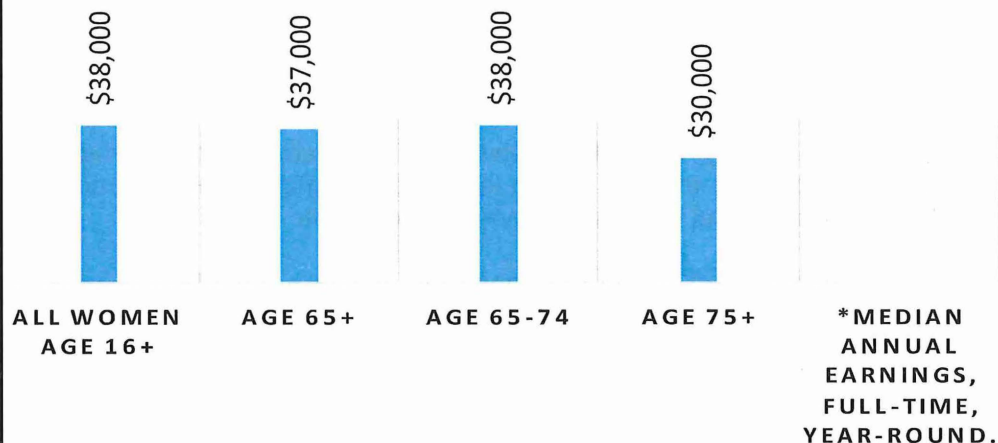
2009-2013 ACS Survey 5-Year Estimates; Minnesota State Demographic Center; [Minnesota 2020](#)

Older Women's Gender Wage Gap

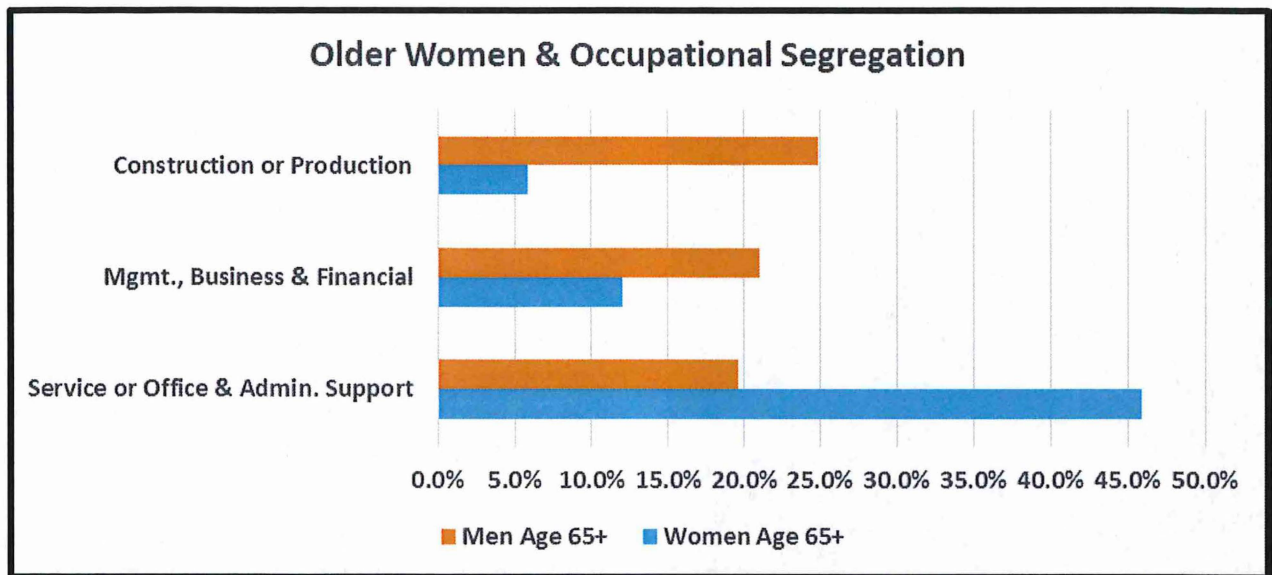


OESW Chart, data from IWPR [The Status of Women in the States: 2015. Employment and Earnings](#)

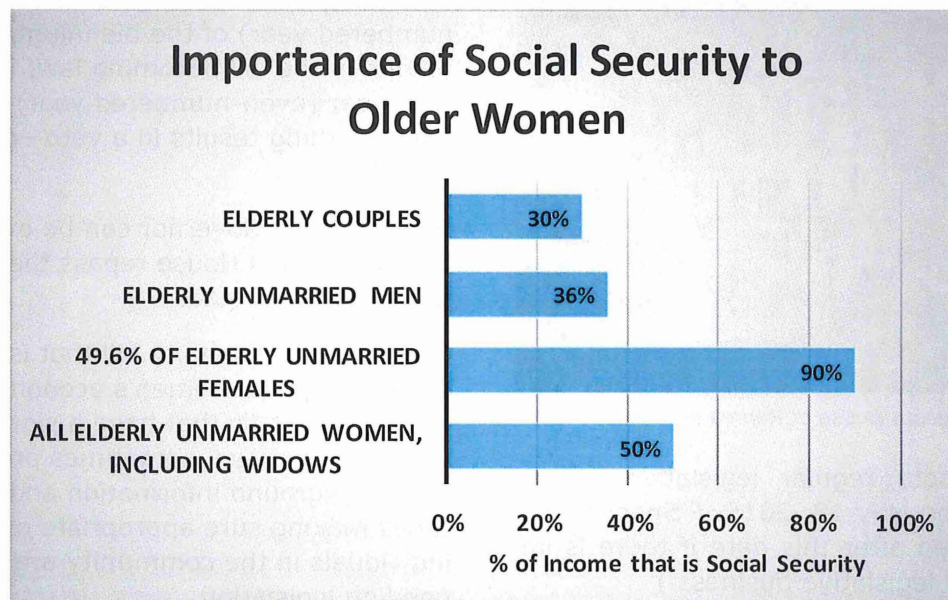
WOMEN'S EARNINGS BY AGE GROUP*



OESW Chart, data from IWPR [The Status of Women in the States: 2015. Employment and Earnings](#)



OESW Chart, data from IWPR, [The Status of Women in the States: 2015. Employment and Earnings](#)



OESW Chart, data from U.S. Social Security Administration

Older Women and Work

How does the educational attainment of older and younger women compare? In what occupations do older women work? What barriers to work do older women face what work supports do they need. [Read the USDOL Women's Bureau Fact Sheet here.](#)

Legislative Overview (May 12, 2015)



Copyright Minnesota House of Representatives.

The 2015 Minnesota regular legislative session ends at midnight on May 18, 2015. ("Special" sessions may be called after this date if there is important unfinished legislative business.)

As of May 12th, 2,327 bills had been introduced in the House and 2,167 in the Senate. A bill is first debated in the appropriate committee in its chamber—House or Senate. For example, a House bill dealing with transportation issues would be heard in the House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee: a Senate Transportation bill would be heard in the Senate Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Most bills are referred to several committees. After a bill is reported out of its final committee, it comes before the full House or the full Senate for discussion and vote.

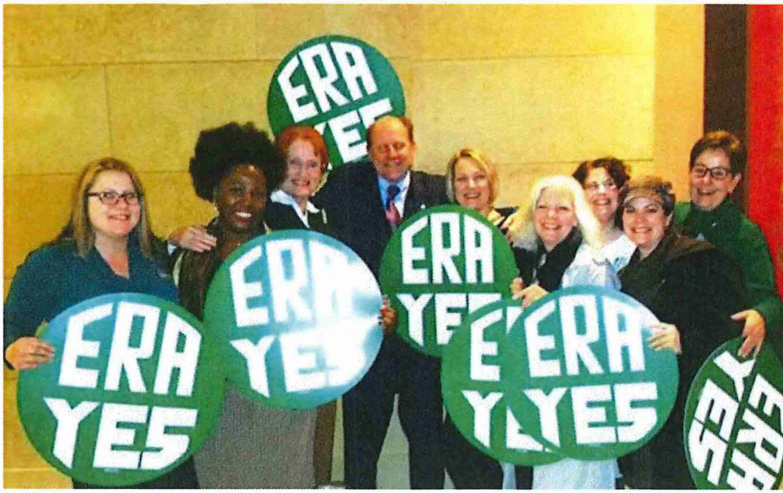
A bill must pass the Senate and the House of Representatives in identical form to become law. If the House and Senate versions differ, a conference committee is appointed, consisting of both Senators and Representatives, to work out a single, final version. The compromise version must then be repassed by both chambers. The version agreed upon by the conference committee cannot be amended on the House or Senate floor: it is an up or down vote (though it can be sent back to conference committee for reconsideration).

If passed in identical form by House and Senate, the bill goes to the Governor, who may sign the bill into law, veto the bill (a line-item veto of individual provisions is allowed only within appropriation bills), or do nothing. In the first year (odd-numbered year) of the biennium, doing nothing results in the bill becoming law; in the second and final year (even-numbered year) of the biennium, doing nothing results in a veto—called a "pocket veto."

A veto by the Governor can be overridden if both the Senate and House repass the bill with a two-thirds majority vote.

OESW examines every bill that is introduced to see if it impacts women's economic status. We watch those bills that have a significant economic impact on women, sometimes providing legislators with background information and research, sometimes making sure appropriate organizations and individuals in the community are aware of the pending legislation.

Here is an [overview and status, as of May 12, 2015](#) of selected bills that OESW is following this session.



ERAMN

[SF 113](#), a bill that would petition Congress to eliminate the sunset on ratification of the federal ERA constitutional amendment will be voted on by the full Minnesota Senate on Wednesday, May 13th. Supporters of ERAMN plan to rally that day in front of Senate Chambers. ERAMN would love to have you join them. They have signs for you to wave! Check the [ERAMN website](#) as the date nears for the actual time. OESW will also post updates on the [OESW Facebook page](#) and on Twitter @mnoesw.

Resources, Research & News

New OESW Status Reports

OLDER WOMEN & POVERTY

1 in 15 Minnesota women age 65 to 74 lived in poverty in 2013. Minnesota's Black or African American women age 65 and over had the highest proportion of women that age in poverty. About 1 in 5 Black or African American women age 65 and over lived in poverty. [View the full status report.](#)

OLDER WOMEN & THE BASIC COST OF LIVING

Median retirement income from all sources for Minnesota's older women is \$17,965. This is 85% of the median income for men of \$21,111, and is 78% of the basic cost of living for a Minnesota elder of \$22,980. [View the full status report.](#)

Leaning Out: Why do Women Retire Earlier than Men

In this Huffington Post article, University of Minnesota Professor Phyllis Moen discusses the answer to this question. [Read the article here.](#)

Cost of Living in Minnesota

OESW's [Older Women & the Basic Cost of Living, 2014](#) status report shows that the cost of meeting basic needs (housing, health care, transportation, food, misc. essentials) for a single Minnesota elder is \$22,980. To find the cost of living in Minnesota and in specific Minnesota counties for individuals in other age groups and for families, [follow this link to MN Dept. of Employment & Economic Development's Cost of Living Tool.](#)

Rural Aging Initiative in North-Eastern Minnesota

Minnesota's Northland Foundation is exploring strategies to help older adults in northeastern Minnesota's underserved rural communities be vital contributors to society and remain as independent as possible throughout their lives. Learn more [Here](#)

Helpful Links

[Job Search Tips for Older Job Seekers](#)

[The Senior Linkage Line®](#): A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors



In This Issue

Director's Message	1
Summary of 2015 Minnesota Legislative Session.....	2
Legislative Activity During the Interim	2
A Peek at the 2016 Legislative Session	3
Our New Generation of Leaders: Grandmas! ..	4
Resources, Research & News.....	5



Message from the Director

This month's newsletter looks at what happened—and didn't happen—in the 2015 legislative session. Sometimes those of us who lurk around the Capitol get a little insular. ("No!" you say.) We think the world turns on what is happening here. For those of you who perhaps have a life, here's a recap of the 2015 Minnesota legislative session:

The regular session ended at midnight on May 18th. Eighty bills had passed, but three were vetoed by Governor Dayton, so only 77 were enacted. This is the lowest number of bills enacted during a regular session since Minnesota became a state in 1858. (My thanks to the Legislative Reference Library for their [always-excellent facts about the Legislature.](#))

In order to work out agreements on the three vetoed bills (bills dealing with jobs, agriculture and the environment, and early childhood/K-12 education) and to pass a couple of other bills that didn't get out of conference committee in time, the Legislature met in a Special Session on June 12, stretching into the wee hours of June 13.

In this month's newsletter, you'll find a fairly detailed summary of legislation that passed that affects women's economic status. After looking at what passed, you can read about what policy and legislative activity will be going on during the interim before the 2016 legislative session begins on March 8, 2016. Settle down with a cold drink in the summer sunshine and then read "A Peek at the 2016 Legislative Session," to see what might be debated by the Legislature next year.

The last article, *Our New Generation of Leader: Grandmas!*, gives a different slant to last month's OESW newsletter about the economic peril that so many of our older women face. This article gives data on the amazing political leadership roles that older women play.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues.

Please send us your suggestions to barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn and visit our [Facebook Page](#) and [Twitter](#).

Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women

Summary of the 2015 Legislative Session

Click [on this link](#) to see a detailed summary of selected legislation that passed in 2015 that affects women's economic status. There are significant changes to Minnesota's child custody/parenting time laws, and child custody is inextricably linked to child support. New laws are aimed to enhance the economic security of older Minnesotans, help alleviate the crippling economic burden of student loans (women don't necessarily have more student loan debt than men, but women make less after graduating, so debt repayment is more likely to be unmanageable), address sex trafficking and other forms of sexual abuse and violence, affect the affordability of health care, ease the cost of child care for low-income women and families, increase—in some cases—cash assistance to very low-income parents, and address a number of other issues important to the economic security of Minnesota's women and their families.

Again, here is the link to [OESW's 2015 Legislative Session Summary](#).

Legislative Activity During the Interim

The 2016 legislative session begins March 8, 2016 and will last only eight weeks.

There are a number of commissions/task forces/work groups that will be meeting during the Interim. Some of these groups are formally required by statute; some are informal. All have the purpose of making recommendations to the Legislature. Attending these meetings provides an excellent opportunity to affect policy decisions at an early stage, when it is generally most flexible. OESW will do its best to post information on when and where these groups are convening on our [Facebook page](#) and on Twitter #mnoesw.

Here is a list of these groups and studies:

Change in Method of Calculating the Parenting Expense Adjustment to Child Support Payments. The interim work group to study this must report to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 2016.

Paid Family Leave State Insurance System. DEED is the lead agency for a study of mechanisms and cost of a *Minnesota Paid Family and Medical Leave Program* that would provide partial wage replacement for workers taking parental, family, or medical leave. Minnesota's Depts. of Labor & Industry and of Health & Human Services are to collaborate with DEED on the study. The legislation requiring this study did not have a date for report to the Legislature, but study funding is only for FY 2016.

Reforms to MNsure and MinnesotaCare. In 2015, bills were considered to eliminate MinnesotaCare, shifting its enrollees to the MNsure health insurance exchange, and to terminate MNsure. These bills did not pass, but instead the [2015 Omnibus Health & Human Services Act](#) established a *Task force on Health Care Financing*, whose mandate is to examine the future of MNsure and MinnesotaCare and the chance for federal waivers that could allow for a broad range of health care reforms. The Task Force is to report to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 2016. (MinnesotaCare offers low-cost health insurance for people with incomes slightly above the poverty level—sometimes called "the working poor." Medicaid covers residents with income near or below the poverty line. MinnesotaCare provides healthcare to about 90,000 Minnesotans earning \$8-\$12/hour. It has been in existence for 23 years.)

Violence against Asian Women & Children. A working group will study domestic violence, trafficking, international abusive marriage, stalking, sexual assault, and other violence against women and children in Minnesota's Asian communities. A report is due to the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2017.

Somali Women's Health Pilot Program. This program will develop strategies to address the health care needs of and health inequities experienced by first generation Somali women. Report due June 30, 2017.

Cooperative Divorce. Authors of bills to allow spouses to divorce by completing an on-line form, with no involvement by attorneys or the court system, have stated their intent to hold further discussions on the concept during the interim.

A Peek at the 2016 Legislative Session

All bills introduced in the first year of the biennium (the odd-numbered year) remain active in the second year, so bills introduced in 2015 can still be heard and passed in 2016.

Here's a list of notable women's economic bills introduced in 2015 that will still be active in 2016:

ERA. There are two ERA bills: One proposes amending the state constitution to have a new section that would read, "Equality under the law shall not be abridged or denied on account of gender." A statewide popular vote is required to amend the constitution. No hearing was held on this bill in 2015. A hearing has been promised in the House in the 2016 session. The second ERA bill petitions Congress to eliminate the sunset on ratification of the federal ERA constitutional amendment. This bill was passed on a 55-6 bipartisan vote by the Minnesota Senate, but did not have a hearing in the House.

Social Security. An Omnibus Tax Bill did not make it out of conference committee before the end of the 2015 session. It may be a priority in 2016. The House version of the Omnibus Tax Bill ([HF848](#)) allows deduction of social security benefits from federal taxable income.

Working Parents Act. This package of bills, "the next step" following the 2014 Women's Economic Security Act, provides earned sick and safe leave, paid family leave (through insurance), wage theft protection, a ban on employers deducting credit card charges from tips, and predictable work schedules. The only component that passed in 2015 was a study of a paid family leave state insurance system.

Minimum Wage. A number of bills were introduced in 2015 (but did not become law) that would scale back the 2014 increase in the state minimum wage. These bills include eliminating automatic increases in minimum wage based on inflation; allowing employers to pay tipped employees less than minimum wage (but not less than \$8/hr.), if their total wage with tips is at least \$12/hr., with no index to inflation; and prohibiting local governments from requiring a higher-than-state minimum wage or requiring employers to provide any employee benefits that exceed state or federal law.

Change in Method of Calculating the Parenting Expense Adjustment to Child Support.

The interim work group to study this must report to the Legislature by January 15, 2016, so expect related legislation in 2016 to enact its recommendations.

State Retirement Savings Plan. Part of the 2014 Women's Economic Security Act was a study, by Minnesota Management & Budget, of a possible state-administered retirement savings plan for private sector employees who are not offered a retirement savings plan by their employer. MMB was not able to meet the required report date of Jan. 15, 2015, but plans to report to the Legislature by Nov. 15, 2015. There may be 2016 legislation based on the recommendations from this study.

Surrogacy. Bills to establish a Legislative Commission on Surrogacy to study and recommend public policy and laws to regulate surrogacy did not pass in 2015.

Cooperative Divorce. Bills to allow spouses to divorce by completing an on-line form, with no involvement by attorneys or the court system, did not receive hearings, but bill authors intend to hold further discussions on the concept during the interim.

Cohabitation and Spousal Maintenance. The House held an informational hearing in 2015 on a bill to allow termination of spousal maintenance if the recipient is living with someone.

Continued on next page....

MNsure and Minnesota Care. In 2015, bills were considered to eliminate MinnesotaCare, shifting its enrollees to the MNsure health insurance exchange, and to terminate MNsure. These bills did not pass, but instead, a *Task force on Health Care Financing* was established to examine the future of MNsure and MinnesotaCare and the chance for federal waivers that could allow for a broad range of health care reforms. A report to the Legislature is due by Jan. 15, 2016.

Transportation as a Women's & Family Issue. The "Getting to Work" bill, which provides funding to nonprofits to provide cars and car repairs to low income persons who need a car to get or keep a job, made it into the Senate version of the Omnibus Jobs Bill, but didn't survive conference committee. Speculation is that there will be a major transportation funding bill in 2016; if so, maybe this minor (\$500,000) provision will be included.

Our New Generation of Leaders: Grandmas!

The theme of last month's OESW newsletter was *The Economic Security of Minnesota's Older Women*. [OESW reports](#) showed that 1 in 15 Minnesota women age 65 to 74 live in poverty, 1 in 9 age 75 and older. There's a great flip side to the portrait of today's older women, though, brought to light by a recent article in The Atlantic ([Playing the Granny Card](#)).

Opening by pointing out the upsetting factoid that humans are one of the few animal species—along with killer whales—in which females live long after they stop reproducing, the article goes on to say, "[W]hatever the reason older women were put on this Earth, their example suggests, maybe the time has come for them to run it."

The theory is that women are usually encumbered with raising children (and care and feeding of husbands) in their early and mid-life years, when men tend to soar professionally. However, once the kids are off to college, today's older women, who overall have more education and professional experience than any preceding generation of women, are ready to "move into overdrive."

Indeed, today's older women are world and U.S. rock stars in political and government leadership:

- Two of our three female U.S. Supreme Court Justices are over age 60. Ruth Bader Ginsburg was appointed a justice at age 60, and is now 82. Sonia Sotomayor was 55 when she was appointed, and will soon turn 61.
- Janet Yellin, the first female Chair of the Federal Reserve, was 67 when she was appointed. She'll serve until she is age 71.
- If Hillary Clinton is elected the first U.S. woman president, she will be 69 when she takes office, and theoretically could remain president until age 77.
- Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, is 61.
- Elizabeth Warren was 63 when she was first elected to the U.S. Senate; she'll turn 65 in a week.

Women in the U.S. House of Representatives:

- 50, or 57%, of the 88 women members of the U.S. House are age 60 or older.
- 18, or 20%, are age 70 or older.
- The oldest woman in the U.S. House is age 85 (Louise Slaughter, from New York).

Continued on next page...

Our New Generation of Leaders: Grandmas! continued

Women in the U.S. Senate:

- 12, or 60%, of the 20 women members of the U.S. Senate are age 60 or older.
- 3, or 15%, are age 70 or older.
- The oldest woman in the U.S. Senate is age 81 (Dianne Feinstein, from California).

What about Minnesota?

Of the 67 women currently serving in the Minnesota House and Senate, 23 (34%) are age 60 or older and 9 (13%) are age 70 or older. The oldest woman legislator is age 78.

Here is a fervent hope that all these amazing older women will erode the double whammy of ageism plus sexism that often faces women "of a certain age" and open the doors for women with grey hair to show the world what they can do!

Resources, Research & News

New Data from USDOL Women's Bureau

- Women's Earnings
- Asian American & Pacific Islander Women in the Labor Force
- Equal Pay: Gender Differences Across Occupations & the Wage Gap.
- Women's Occupations

[Find the data here.](#)



In This Issue

Message from the Director

Director’s Message.....1

Women in Minnesota’s Elected
Offices: Overview.....2

Women in Minnesota’s Elected
Offices: Selected Offices.....3

Women in Minnesota’s Elected Offic-
es: Women in the Legislature.....4

Women in Minnesota’s Elected Offic-
es: Profile of Women Legislators.....5

Women in Minnesota’s Elected Offic-
es: Women Legislators by Party.....6

Women in Minnesota’s Elected
Offices: Gender by Party.....7

Women in Minnesota’s Elected Offic-
es: Women on County Boards.....8

This issue of the OESW newsletter features seven new OESW fact sheets on the gender composition of Minnesota’s elected offices.

Women are significantly under-represented in Minnesota’s elected offices. Of particular note is the gender breakdown of Minnesota’s 87 county boards—powerful governing bodies that had expenditures in 2012 totaling \$6 billion, and that administer such areas as child protection, social services, nursing homes, public health services and economic development. Fifty-one percent of county boards have no women; 84 percent have no or only one woman; only 3% have a majority of women commissioners.

The fact sheets also provide a more in-depth look at women in Minnesota’s Legislature—by chamber (House and Senate), age, urban v. suburban v. Greater Minnesota, and by political party.

A special thank you to OESW intern Rose Hartnett, who is on her way back to Rutgers University, for her excellent work in developing these fact sheets. My appreciation also to Lee Meilleur and Troy Lawrence, with LCC-GIS, for developing the map of gender composition of county boards.

These fact sheets are also available on the [OESW website](#).

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues.

Please send us your suggestions to barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn and visit our [OESW website](#), [Facebook Page](#) and [Twitter](#).



Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women

MN Women in U.S. Congress



■ Women 20% ■ Men 80%

10 Minnesota Seats in Congress

Women in the Legislature



■ Women 33% ■ Men 67%

201 seats in MN State Legislature

Women on County Boards



■ Women 14% ■ Men 86%

87 Minnesota Counties

Women Mayors



■ Women 16% ■ Men 84%

825 Minnesota Cities

Best available data; may not reflect recent changes.
League of Minnesota Cities

Women on City Councils



■ Women 27% ■ Men 73%

Total of 3,481 City Council Members in MN

Best available data; may not reflect recent changes.
League of Minnesota Cities

Women on School Boards



■ Women 40% ■ Men 58% ■ Unknown 2%

Total of 2,176 School Board Members in MN

Best available data; may not reflect recent changes.
Minnesota School Board Association

Fact Sheet Series: Women in Minnesota's Elected Offices 2015

Selected Offices

Congress

Senators



Representatives



State Constitutional Offices

Governor*



Lieutenant Governor



Attorney General



State Auditor

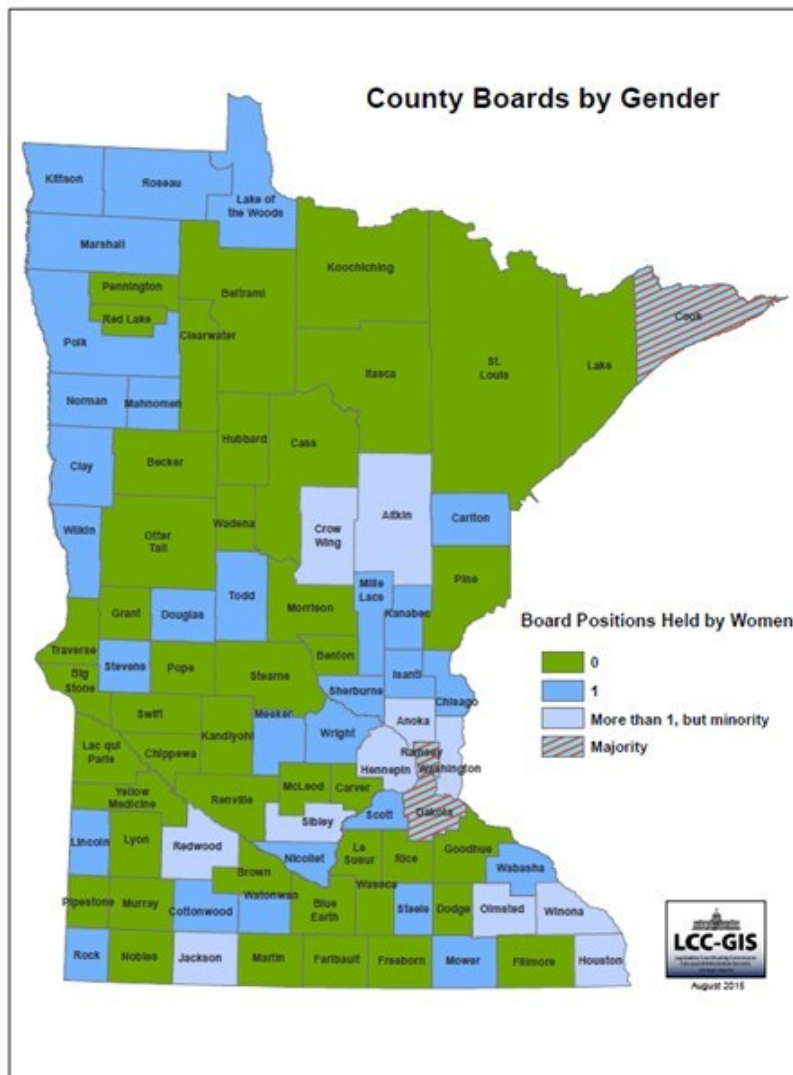


Secretary of State

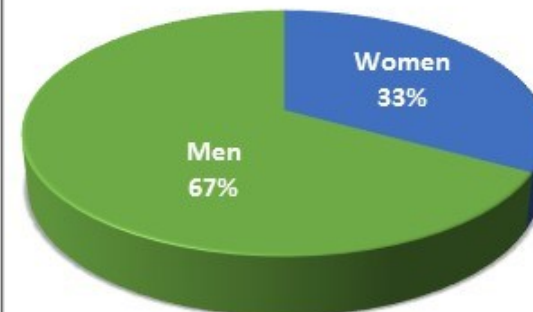


*A woman has never been Governor of Minnesota

County Boards by Gender

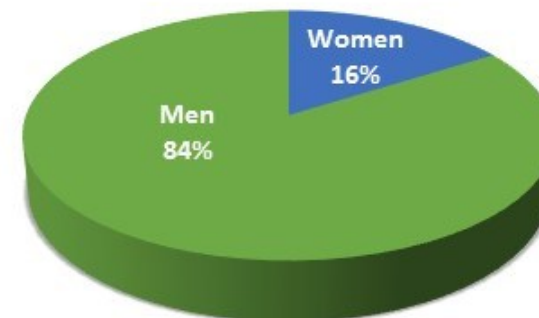


Minnesota Legislature 2015



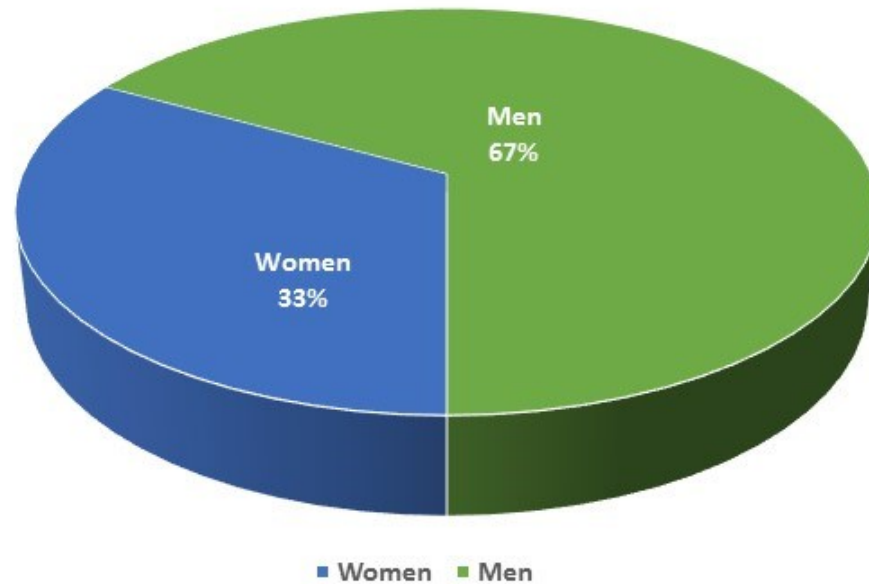
*201 Legislators in Minnesota

Minnesota Mayors 2015

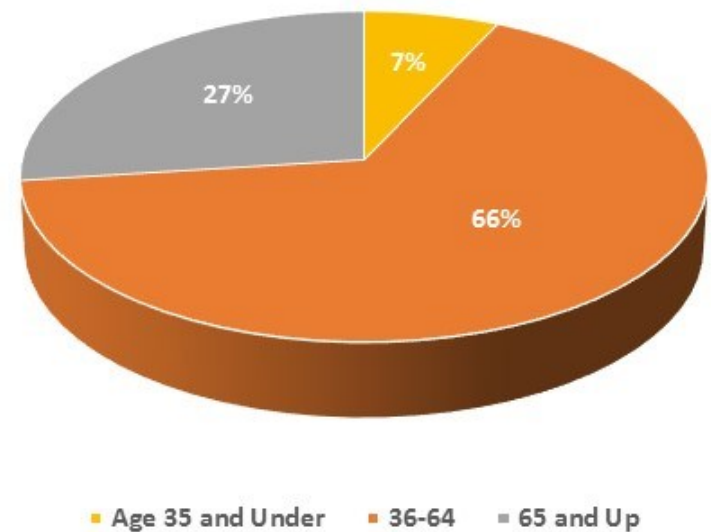


*825 Cities in Minnesota

Women in MN Legislature



Women in the Legislature by Age

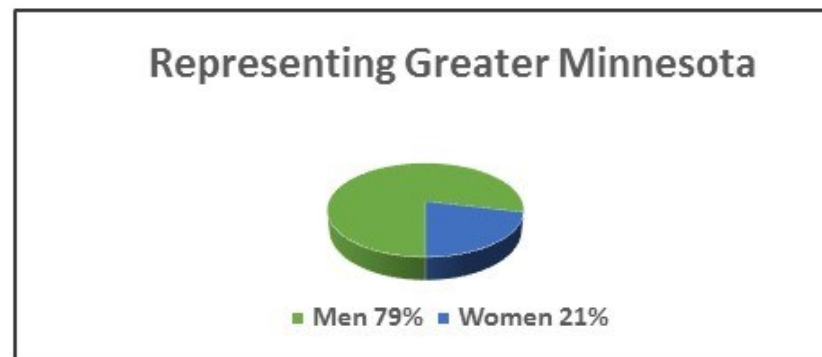
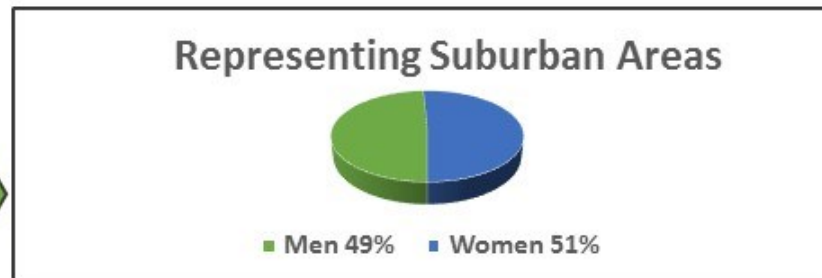
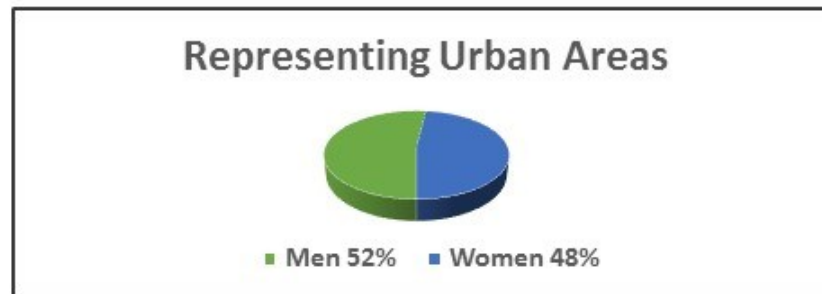
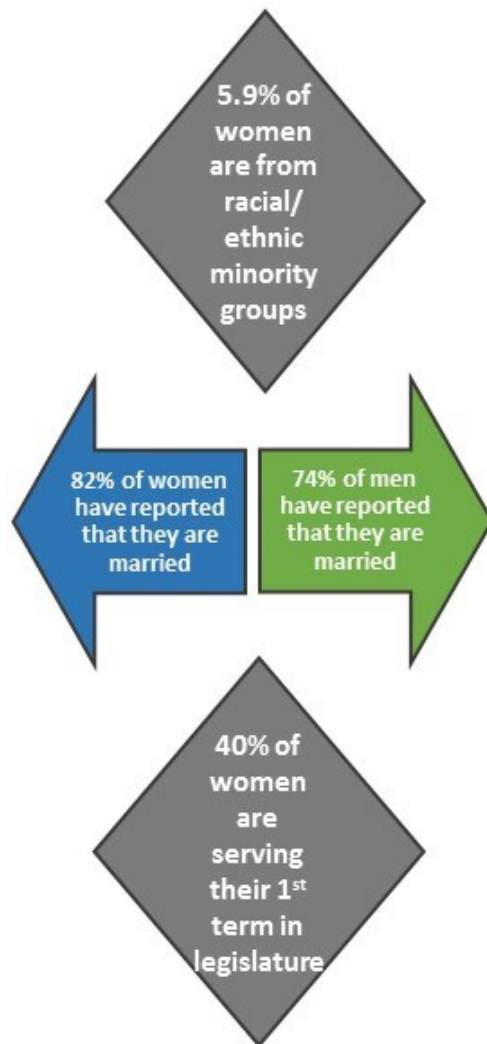


Women in the MN House



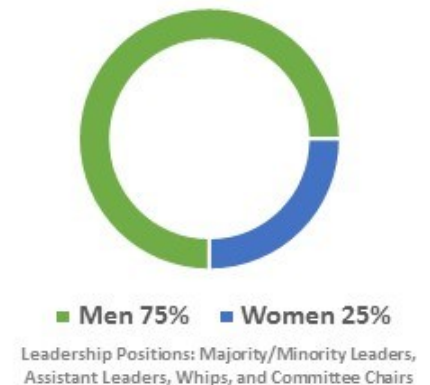
Women in MN Senate



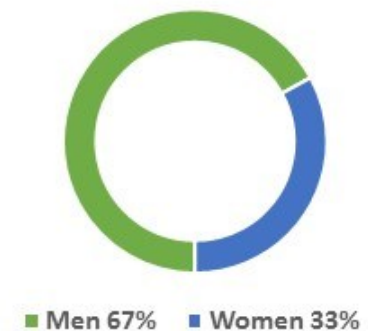


Distinctions made from Thrive MSP2040 Community Designations Map by the Metropolitan Council

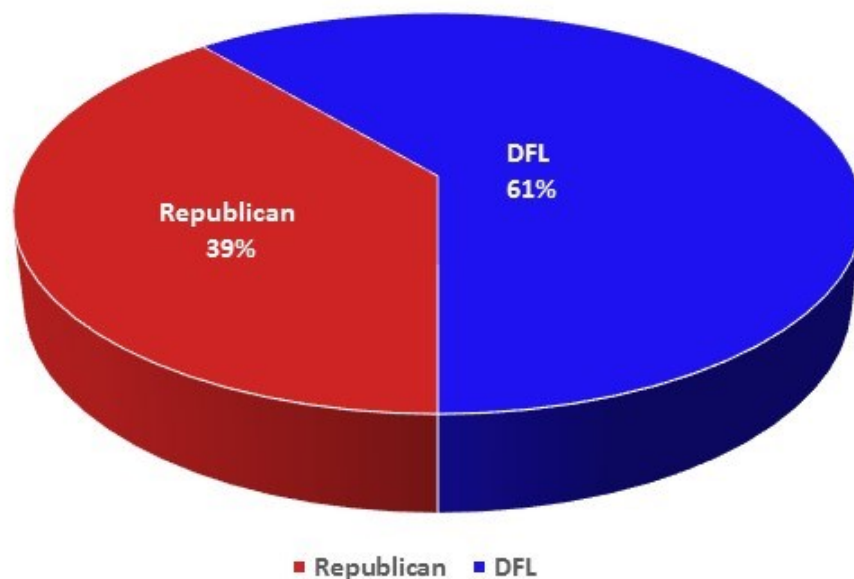
Leadership Positions



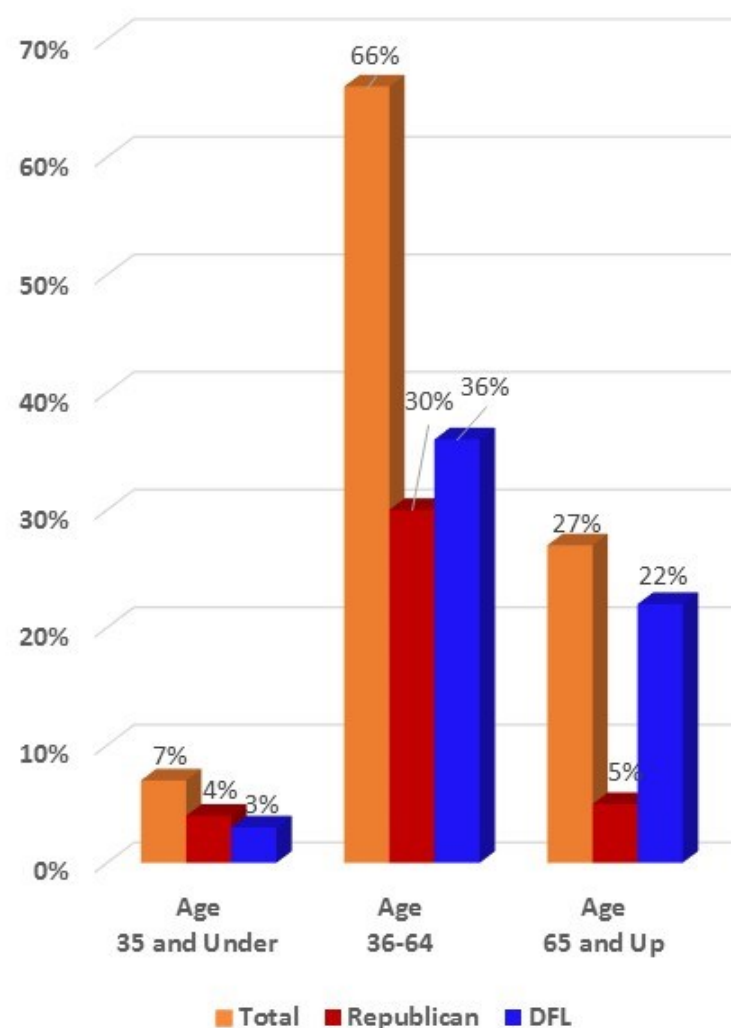
Women in the Legislature



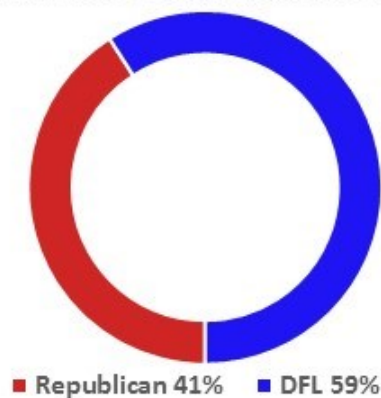
Women in MN Legislature



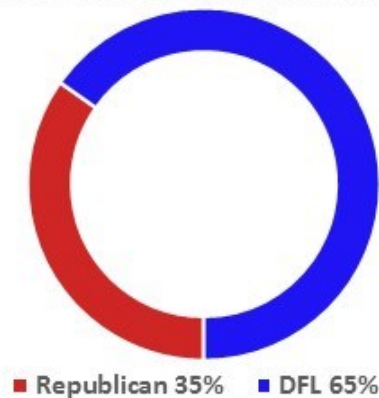
Age of Women Legislators



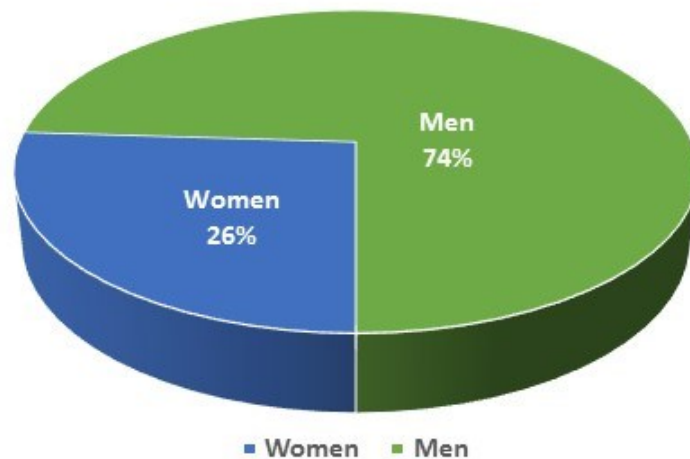
Women in MN House



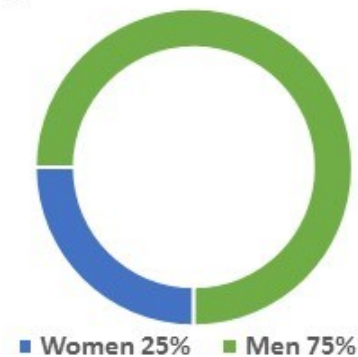
Women in MN Senate



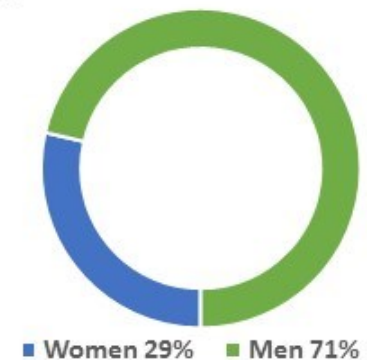
Republican Women in Legislature



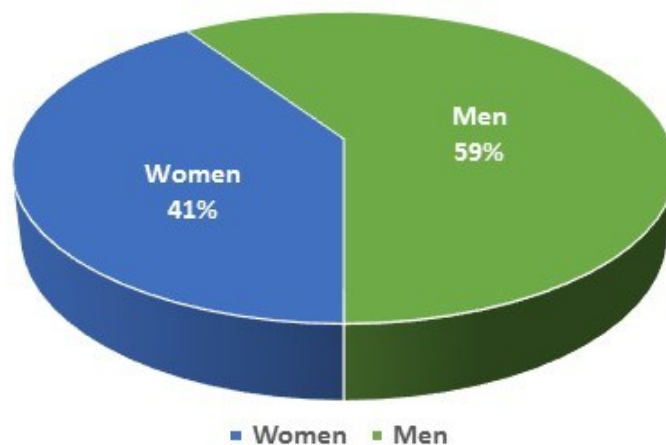
Republican Women in House



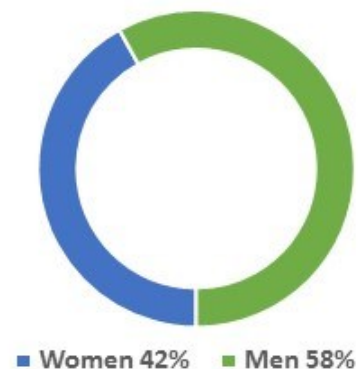
Republican Women in Senate



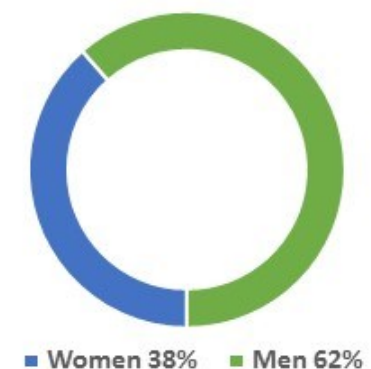
DFL Women in Legislature

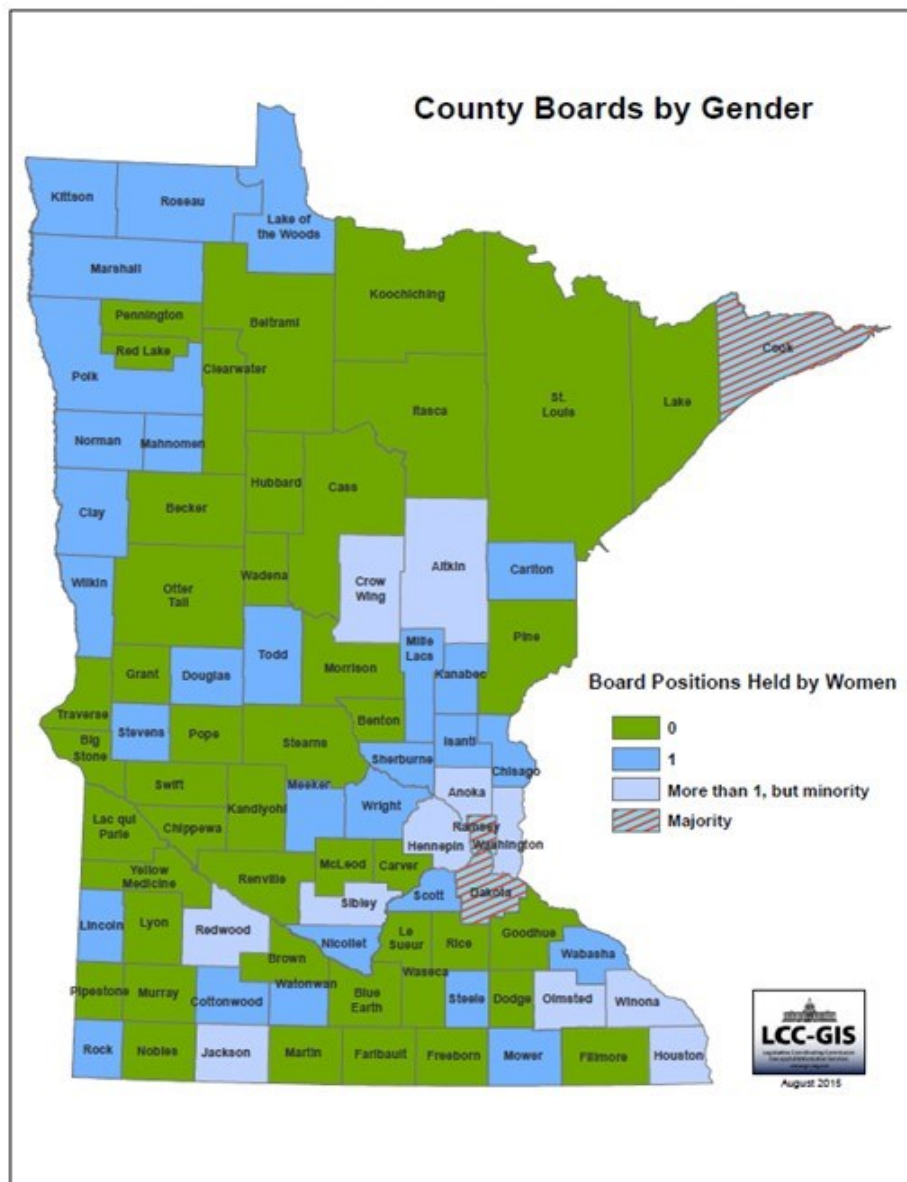


DFL Women in House



DFL Women in Senate





51% of Minnesota's Counties have no women on the County Board

84% of Minnesota's Counties have no or only one woman on the County Board

3% of Minnesota's Counties have a majority of women on the County Board

Facts about Minnesota's County Boards*

- Of the 87 counties, 81 have five-member boards; six have seven-member boards—Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey and St. Louis.
- County board commissioners are public elected officials, serving four-year, staggered terms.
- Counties administer social services, corrections, child protection, public safety, library services, hospitals, nursing homes, public health services, planning and zoning, economic development, parks & recreation, water quality, and solid waste management.
- In 2012, expenditures by Minnesota counties totaled \$6 billion. Counties provided 57% (more than \$204M) of the total statewide funding for child welfare services, invested \$73M in economic development and housing, and spent \$890M in building roads, bridges, and other public infrastructure.

*Association of Minnesota Counties. *Why Minnesota Counties Matter!* February 2014 <http://googl/7TJiaQ>



ISSUE 5/269

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF WESA

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015

In This Issue Message from the Director

Director's Message.....1
WESA: Status of Implementation... ..2
WESA: The Legislation...3
WESA: Overview.....3
Resources, Research & News.....4
Answer to Photo Quiz.....4



On Mother's Day of 2014, Minnesota women cheered Governor Dayton as he signed the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) into law.

WESA is a broad bundle of provisions that homes in on the causes of the gender pay gap and provides support for working parents, especially women, to help them balance their work responsibilities with their family caregiving responsibilities.

So...it's been over a year now. What has WESA done and how is it doing?

This issue of the OESW newsletter will update you on what has happened with each of the provisions of WESA. You'll also find a link to the 2014 legislation and a summary of WESA.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues.

Please send us your suggestions to barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn and visit our [Facebook Page](#) and [Twitter](#).

Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women



What is this picture? Here's a hint: it's on the State Capitol Grounds. More picture clues on next pages. Answer on page 4.

WESA: Implementation

It's been over a year since WESA became law. Is it living up to its promise of helping women and all working parents balance their work responsibilities with family caregiving responsibilities? Is it giving women the tools to close the gender pay gap?

Read the OESW report on WESA implementation to see what grant projects are underway to train women for nontraditional occupations and to encourage women entrepreneurs to start and expand businesses in high-growth, high-revenue industry sectors. Check out the grants for apprenticeships for women in nontraditional occupations. See the type and number of complaints that have been filed since WESA passed alleging workplace violation of WESA protections of working women and parents—an indication both of compliance with WESA and general awareness of WESA's new provisions. Find out how the Equal Pay Certificate program is coming along.

[Click here for the report on WESA implementation.](#)

(See page 3 for a link to the actual WESA legislation and to an overview of WESA.)



Clue #2

WESA: The Legislation

You can cross-reference the overview of WESA (below) and the report on WESA implementation (page 2) with the actual wording of the law that passed in 2014.

[Laws of Minnesota 2014 Chapter 239. Click here.](#)

Clue #3



WESA: An Overview

A detailed summary of the law: non-traditional jobs for women; unemployment benefits; equal pay certificates; women entrepreneurs; study of state-administered retirement savings plan; pregnancy, parenting and sick leave; pregnancy and nursing mother accommodations; wage disclosure protection; familial status protection; penalties for non-compliance. [Click here.](#)

Resources, Research & News

Workshop on Legislative Research

On July 14, the Minnesota Women's Consortium and OESW co-sponsored a workshop on how to use the legislative websites to research and track legislation. Elizabeth Lincoln, Director of the Legislative Research Library, was our excellent guide. To tailor the workshop to gender equity research, the issue of child support/child custody was used as an example. Melinda Hugdahl, Staff Attorney with the Minnesota Legal Services Advocacy Project, provided an overview of legislative activity on this issue. [Here is a link to the video of the legislative research workshop.](#) (OESW thanks the Minnesota House Public Information Services for recording the workshop and making the video available to the public.)

Women and Medicare: An Unfinished Agenda

This report by the American Society on Aging (ASA) provides evidence that lack of Medicare coverage for long term care services and high out-of-pocket costs place a disproportionate burden on older women. The report documents the social and economic disadvantage of our current generation of older women.

[Click here for the ASA report.](#) You may also want to look at the OESW reports on [Older Women & Poverty](#) and [Older Women & the Basic Cost of Living.](#)

The Cancer Legal Line

Cancer has a large economic impact on residents of Minnesota. Every year, approximately 23,000 new cancer cases are diagnosed in the state, and over 9,100 Minnesotans die from cancer. Cancer Legal Line's mission is to alleviate the non-medical stressors faced by cancer patients and their loved ones, including economic stressors.

Studies show that 30%-50% of all cancer patients fall below the poverty line during their treatment, and that 16.5% are unable to work during treatment [*Journal of Clinical Oncology, Vol 24, No 32 (November 10), 2006: pp. 5149-5153*] (Minnesota's current unemployment rate is 3.9%.)

Seventy-five percent of the Cancer Legal Line clients are women, and breast cancer is the most common cancer that the nonprofit legally assists with.

Education and cancer-related information, resources, and referrals are all offered for free by the Cancer Legal Line. [Visit the website here.](#)

Women, Especially Young Women, More Likely than Men to Work Multiple Jobs

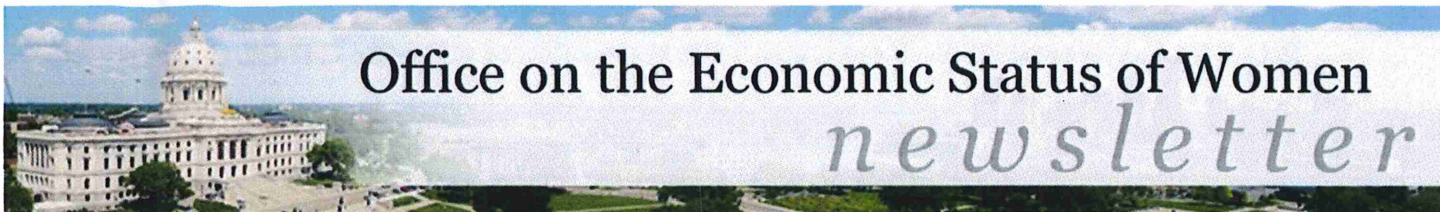
[See this report](#) by the Economic Policy Institute.

Why has Japan surpassed U.S. in women's workforce participation?

Japan, long troubled by a large gender work gap, now surpasses U.S. in women's workforce participation. Chris Farrell, on American Public Radio's Marketplace Morning Report, says, "What I find so dispiriting about the numbers is less what is said about Japan and more about what is going on here in the U.S." Farrell holds that the high cost of child care in the U.S. discourages women from entering the workforce, and that's bad news for our economy. Japan's government has invested in child care; ours has work yet to do. In two-thirds of the states, says Farrell, the cost of full-time, center-based child care is greater than the average annual cost of tuition and fees at a four-year, public university. [Listen to the podcast here.](#)

Answer to the photo quiz: The pictures are of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Memorial, on the State Capitol Grounds in St. Paul, on Cedar St., across from the Centennial Building. This memorial recognizes the efforts of Minnesota women to win the right to vote. The memorial's woven metal represents the time taken to achieve equal voting rights.

Bonus points if you knew that the photo on p. 3 refers to the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention—the first women's rights convention, which called for women's right to vote.



ISSUE 6/270

2015: WOMEN'S VOICES FROM GREATER MINNESOTA

NOV./DEC. 2015

In This Issue Message from the Director

Director's Message.....1

The Listening Sessions.....2

What is Working.....2

Overview of Issues.....3

Recurrent Themes.....4

List of Priority Issues.....5

Resources, Research, &
News.....6

Last year, OESW began what might become an annual tradition: traveling around Greater Minnesota to hold listening sessions on women's economic issues. The purpose of the listening sessions is to gain insight into priority women's economic issues in different regions of Minnesota: to learn what initiatives are successful at helping women (and their families) achieve economic security and what remain as concerns.

It's often difficult for those who live far from St. Paul to stay informed of legislative proposals and to have their voices be part of the legislative debate. It is hoped that these listening sessions will make this a little less difficult.

This newsletter highlights comments from the listening sessions. [Here is a link to the full report, 2015: Women's Voices from Greater Minnesota.](#)



A special thanks to Patty Tanji, who volunteered to travel with me to all eight sessions and record comments of participants.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues.

Please send us your suggestions to barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn and visit our [Facebook Page](#) and [Twitter](#).

Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women

"International Falls is a warm heart in a cold land."

...International Falls

"Women today don't accept anything less than equality for our daughters. We are changing the culture."

...Rochester

2015: Women's Voices from Greater Minnesota

[Read the full report here.](#)

The Listening Sessions

Cloquet	September 22
International Falls	September 23
Thief River Falls	September 23
Bemidji	September 24
Brainerd	September 24
Marshall	September 30
Austin	October 1
Rochester	November 2

In total, 86 people participated: individual citizens, representatives from 51 different organizations (private, nonprofit, education, and government sectors) and 10 state legislators. ([A complete list of attendees is in the report appendix.](#))

What is Working

Community colleges are robust, vital partners in women's economic success in Greater Minnesota. They recognize the need for short-term training for in-demand, high-wage jobs. Community colleges work hard to encourage women to gain skills in non-traditional, well-paid occupations.

Nonprofit organizations have many successful programs to help low-income individuals and families cope with the challenges of everyday living and to help them get ahead.

Government programs help women succeed and low-income families survive and climb out of poverty. Many of the successful nonprofit programs receive government grants.

Women are taking their economic security into their own hands by starting **small businesses** in Greater Minnesota.

Greater Minnesota businesses are helping those in their communities.

The communities themselves have a "can do" spirit and work together as a community to have all residents prosper and be secure.

"We're a smart community with a lot of talent and active leaders. Our residents are giving and charitable. We have a lot of services, and our schools are excellent."

...Rochester

"Rural communities have a 'can do' ethic. People take care of themselves and their neighbors."

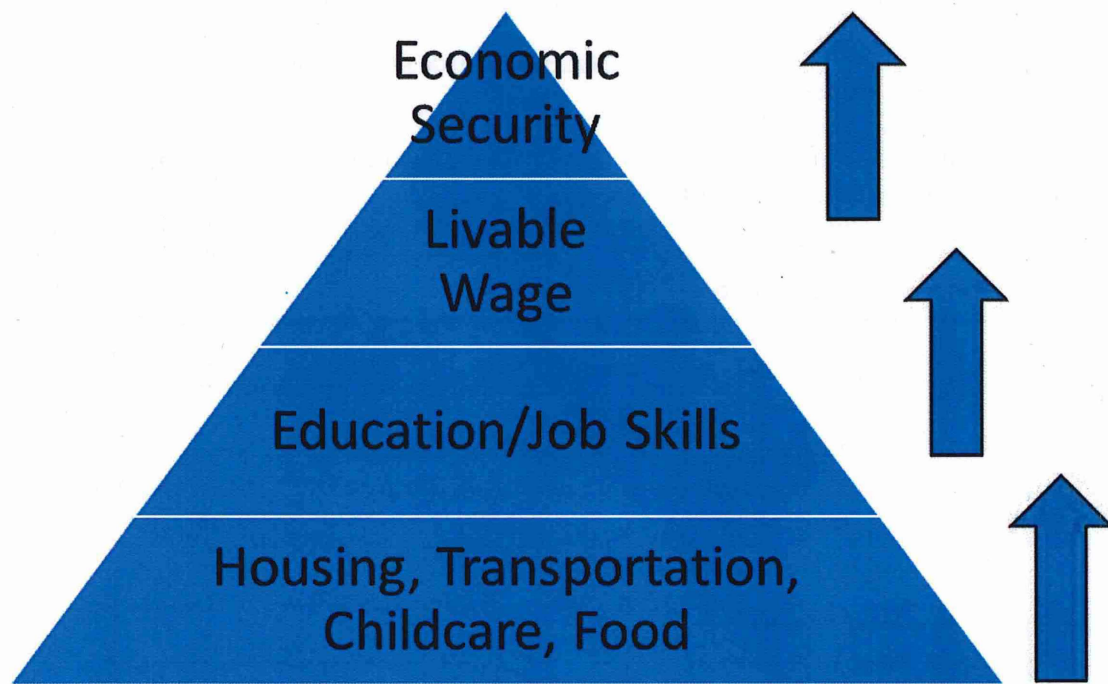
...International Falls

Priority Women's Economic Issues: Overview

There is a striking connectivity and dependency among the women's economic issues voiced by listening session participants. Economic security is the goal, and there are definite building blocks that must be laid as a foundation before climbing the ladder to that goal.

Poverty is the thread that wound through all issues. Poverty means you can't afford a decent car to get to work, a decent home—or any home—food, or childcare.

It came through loud and clear that education is the means to get a job that pays a livable wage so you can rise out of poverty. However, similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, people aren't able to get the education to get a living wage job to rise out of poverty unless certain other basic needs are met—needs like food, housing, transportation, and childcare.



"If people have in-demand job skills, they won't have problems with affordable housing."

...Rochester

"It's hard to rise out of poverty."

...Thief River Falls

"Until we pay people a living wage for the work they are doing, all problems will get worse."

...Brainerd

Strong, Recurrent Themes

- ♦ The minimum wage is not a living wage.
- ♦ Our government assistance system “punishes you for trying to get out of poverty.”
- ♦ Childcare. Everywhere, childcare is neither available nor affordable. Infant care is especially hard to come by.
- ♦ Greater Minnesota has limited public transit and many low-income people can’t afford a reliable car.
- ♦ Lack of safe and affordable housing is a workforce issue, an issue for students, single mothers, immigrant and migrant families. Lack of housing is a common cause of abused women staying with their abusers.
- ♦ As heard in 2014, jobs are available everywhere, but most are low-wage jobs. There are higher wage jobs available, but there is a need for job skills training.
- ♦ Rural communities struggle with attracting and keeping young, well-educated professionals, especially well-educated young women.
- ♦ There is a need for career-oriented education, teaching in-demand job skills, preferably in a condensed time period, and often starting at early ages—middle school and up.
- ♦ There is a crying need for financial literacy education.
- ♦ A person’s past—legal problems, credit problems, substance abuse—is often a barrier to employment.
- ♦ Student debt is crippling for our young people.
- ♦ Older women often live in poverty.
- ♦ Single parents have an especially hard time achieving economic security.
- ♦ Affordable and accessible healthcare remains elusive, perhaps more so in rural Minnesota than in the metropolitan areas.
- ♦ Women entrepreneurs are a great success story in Greater Minnesota. We need to encourage and support women in starting and expanding small businesses.

“The cost of daycare plus low wages makes women question whether they should work or stay home.”

...Bemidji

“I hear of women and children, families, couch surfing or living in cars.”

...Austin

“The best way to success in life is through work, and you can’t get to work if you don’t have wheels.”

...Brainerd

Priority Women's Economic Issues

2015: Women's Voices from Greater Minnesota

[Read the full report here.](#)

Poverty
Childcare
Transportation
Safe and Affordable Housing
Job Skills Training
Single Mothers
Older Women
Gender Pay Gap
Entrepreneurship
Attracting Young Professionals to Rural Communities
Financial Literacy
Student Debt
Education
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
Diversity
Women in Leadership
Healthcare

"High school seniors and college freshman need to understand that when they use a credit card to buy a hamburger at McDonalds, they will be paying for that meal for the next 30 years."

...Marshall

"No one wants to live at a domestic abuse shelter, but they can't afford housing. No wonder so many women go back to their abusers. At least he provides a roof over their heads."

...Bemidji

"Women get the job done."

...International Falls

Resources, Research, & News

Changing Number of Women in Minnesota Legislature

With the election of Peggy Flanagan in the October 3rd special election, the number of women in the Minnesota House increased from 44 to 45, or from 32.8% to 33.6%. Representative Flanagan's election similarly increased the overall number of women in the Minnesota Legislature (House and Senate) from 67 to 68, or from 33.3% to 33.8%.

There is a possibility of more significant changes in gender composition after the November 2016 general election, in which both House and Senate state legislators stand for election. So far, two women state representatives (Reps. Ann Lenczewski and Kim Norton, both DFL) and four women state senators (Sens. Barb Goodwin, Bev Scalze and Kathy Sheran—DFL, and Sen. Julianne Ortman—Republican) have announced they are not running for re-election.

How does Minnesota compare to other states? As of August 2015, women held 24.3% of all state legislative seats—22.3% of the Senate seats and 25% of the House seats.

Minnesota ranks fourth nationally in the number of women state legislators, behind Vermont (41.1%), Colorado (41%) and Arizona (35.6%). We were tied at fourth with Nevada and Washington, but Representative Flana-

gan's election lowers those two states to a fifth place tie. (Information on other states from the Council of State Governments <http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/women-state-government-2015>)

Why Has the Number of Women in State Legislatures Stalled?

Although female candidates for state legislative seats are just as likely as males to win, the percent of state legislators nationally that are female has stalled at about 25% for more than a decade.

Minnesota has seen a similar plateau. Minnesota's state legislature had a historic high of 34.8% (70 women out of 201 legislators) in the 2006 and 2008 general elections. We are now at 33.8% (67 women legislators).

Why? This article from the Pew Charitable Trusts' news magazine, Stateline, explores the reasons. Read "[Stalled Progress for Women in State Legislatures.](#)"

Preventing Elder Abuse

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center's mission is to mobilize communities to prevent and alleviate abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of elders and vulnerable adults. The Center focuses on public awareness, professional education and practice, and public policy. More information here <http://elderjusticemn.org/>

