



Wisconsin Women's Network

Annual Report 2017

The Wisconsin Women's Network (WWN) is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization that promotes the advancement of women and girls in Wisconsin through communication, education, advocacy, and connections. A top priority of the Network is to foster communication among our partners and supporters to strengthen our voices while working together on issues of common concern.

The Wisconsin Women's Network is a non-stock and nonprofit corporation under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes. WWN is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. WWN is also exempt from state income taxation. 2017 marked the 38th Anniversary of the Wisconsin Women's Network. This report provides a brief summation of the main activities for the year, but is not all-inclusive.

WISCONSIN WOMEN'S NETWORK POLICY INSTITUTE

The Wisconsin Women's Network Policy Institute trains women to become advocates in their communities and to navigate Wisconsin's legislative, administrative rules, and budget processes in order to advance legislation that improves the lives of women and girls in Wisconsin. Participants from the 2016-17 Institute focused on issues affecting women's health, safety, and economic security. The 2016-17 participants were recruited from organizations across the state, including the Salvation Army, Wisconsin Council on Children & Families, Milwaukee Public Schools, Beloit College, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Centro Hispano, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Save IRIS Coalition, and many more. Participants met for a series of two-day retreats in Madison through the fall of 2016 and winter/early spring 2017, and were taught the ins-and-outs of the public policy process.

Instructor, Vicky Selkove, a former public interest attorney and passionate advocate for Wisconsin's low-income families and children, led the 2016-17 participants. Kara Pennoyer, Public Policy Chair - WWN Board of Directors, served a vital role in organizing, planning, and executing the successful program. Additionally, participants received assistance from several mentors and a series of guest speakers with expertise in the areas of public policy, journalism, lobbying, advocacy, politics, coalition building, public speaking, and other key areas.

Funding for the 2016-17 Wisconsin Women's Network Policy Institute came from the Evjue Foundation, the Buck Foundation, Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region, Hunger Task Force, Embrace, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin, End Domestic Abuse WI, Milwaukee Center for Children and Youth, Winnebago County Public Health, Interfaith Senior Programs, La Crosse Area Synod ELCA, MICA & WISDOM, West Cap, UW-Madison Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families, as well as many individual donors.

For the 2017-18 Policy Institute, applications were distributed beginning August 7 with a deadline of September 4, 2017. Out of over 50 applicants, 25 individuals were selected for participation into the program in September 2017. The 2017-18 Institute focuses on women's health, safety, and economic security issues affecting women in Wisconsin.

Participants were recruited from organizations across the state, including WISDOM/CUSH, Supporting Families Together, Sheboygan County Health, Partners in Policymaking, Mahogany C.A.R.E.S. Foundation, Food Pantry of Waukesha County, A Cry for Help Foundation, and many more. Participants met for their first retreat in Madison on November 3 and 4. The second retreat will be held on December 8 and 9, with two more retreats to follow in 2018.

Vicky Selkove once again leads the Policy Institute for the 2017-18 session, with support from the WWN Board of Directors and the Policy Institute Committee. Project Coordinator, Lynnsey Erickson, provides major planning and operations assistance for the 2017-18 Policy Institute.

Participants also receive guidance from several mentors and guest speakers with expertise in the areas of public policy, journalism, lobbying, advocacy, politics, coalition building, fundraising, and more.

Funding for the 2017-18 Wisconsin Women's Network Policy Institute came from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Evjue Foundation, Congregations United to Serve Humanity, WI Representatives of Activity Professionals, Watertown Family Center, 9to5 Wisconsin, Supporting Families Together, GWAAR, AARP Wisconsin, Lindbergh Elementary, Wisconsin Voices, Medical College of Wisconsin, Great Rivers United Way, Milwaukee Public Schools, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, and JOSHUA Leadership Team, as well as many individual donors.

"WOMEN ON TOPIC" Speaker Series

In 2017, after a hiatus to refocus event efforts, WWN resumed hosting "Women on Topic", an ongoing speaker series in July. The July event featured a panel presentation by one of the 2016-17 Policy Institute teams. Institute participants Elise Buchbinder, Kanasha Byrd, Lynnsey Erickson, Erin Miller, and Robyn Thibado shared their findings and experiences advocating for teen dating violence prevention. They led a robust discussion about what Wisconsin can do next to address this growing problem.

September's "Women on Topic" featured WWN board member, Kira Stewart, and her presentation "Going Beyond Just Talking, Having *The Conversation*". Kira shared valuable information about advanced medical directives, including how to complete Wisconsin's Power of Attorney for Health Care form for adults, and how to initiate end-of-life conversations with loved ones.

The final "Women on Topic" of 2017, in October, featured Natalie DeMaioribus from the Rape Crisis Center to discuss bystander intervention methods for domestic and sexual violence. Natalie used hands-on activities to teach the audience about concrete tools for situation assessment and how to safely intervene as a bystander willing to step-in.

The "Women on Topic" speaker series offers the public a unique opportunity to hear the timely perspective of women leaders from a variety of fields as they assess the status of women and girls in Wisconsin and determine how WWN supporters can work together to improve women's lives in 2017 and beyond.

WWN MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

2017 marked the fourth year for the WWN Mentorship Program, a yearlong program designed to connect undergraduate women to women professionals across the Madison area. The purpose of the program is to provide undergraduate women a professional, caring, supportive mentor relationship that focuses on issues relevant to young women who are completing their undergraduate studies, becoming ready to enter the workforce, and preparing for future success in their careers and personal lives.

For 2017, 14 undergraduate women were matched with 14 professionals in the Madison community. The mentoring pairs met once a month throughout the year and discussed topics ranging from resume/cover letter writing to networking, interviewing, and developing a work/life balance. In March, the Mentorship Program's team-building session focused on self-reflection and a Myers-Briggs personality evaluation. Karen Dwyer, Human Resources Manager at Fiskars Corporation, conducted this March activity. The Mentorship Program hosted a Spring Educational & Networking Event in April, where mentees participated in speed-interviewing exercises with mentors, followed by a networking session with community members. Panelists at the spring event included Julann Jatczak from Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, Dionne Boedeker from Central Wisconsin Center, and Kelda Helen Roys from OpenHomes.

In September 2017, the Mentorship Program hosted a Fall Educational & Networking Session for students, with the topics focused on what it is like to be a woman in the workplace, overcoming barriers, embracing individuality, and cultural competency. Nicole Vafadari from Fiskars, Allison Cooley from Effectability LLC, Samantha Sweet from GE Healthcare, and Melissa Turczyn from Michael Best & Friedrich LLP were the panelists for this event.

Applications for the 2018 Mentorship Program were distributed beginning in October 2017, with a deadline of December 15, 2017. Mentors and mentees for the program will be selected and placed into pairs by early January 2018.

OTHER PROGRAMS

WWN hosted and/or participated in the following programs and events in 2017:

- **Wisconsin Women's Network Policy Institute Friend-raiser: Brows and Bosses** held on June 27 at Arch Apothecary raised approximately \$200 and provided the community with a firsthand glimpse at the program's achievements.
- **The 2017 Women's Equality Day Celebration** was held August 24, 2017 and raised over \$12,000. The event featured special guest speakers Davette Baker, Elise Buchbinder, Nela Kalpic, Erin Miller, and T.R. Williams, all graduates of the 2016-17 WWN Policy Institute. They collectively shared their unique perspectives on the intersection of equity and identity. Lisa Pugh, Executive Director of The Arc Wisconsin received the Helen Marks Dicks Award for Excellence in Advocacy.
- **The 2017 Artful Women Art Show and Sale**, held October 29 - December 1 at the UW Hospital's Skylight Lounge Gallery in Madison, provided a venue for 56 Wisconsin women artists to show their work and introduced visitors to the work of many talented women in our state. A public Meet the Artists' Reception was held November 19, and was well attended.

The Wisconsin Women's Network was also invited to participate at the following events:

- Community Shares of Wisconsin - The Big Share on March 7, 2017, which raised nearly \$9,000.

- Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health Women's Health Policy Summit on March 14, 2017.
- EMPOWER Madison launch event on Thursday, March 30, 2017.
- Community Shares of Wisconsin "Walk the Walk" on Friday, October 13, and many other CSW events.

COMMUNICATIONS

In 2017, WWN redeveloped its website, allowing supporters to better access information about the organization, its mission, and its programming. Along with the collaborative efforts of the WWN board, WWN Communications Chair Blair Brophy and the WWN Communications Committee: Nicole Vafadari, WWN Board member, and volunteers Hannah Akbik, Trevor Berman, Kristina Levan, and Taeli Turner, worked to reconstruct and redesign the website.

The WWN Communications Committee also played an integral role in developing social media campaigns around the WWN's outreach and promotions for the Community Shares of Wisconsin Big Share, the annual Women's Equality Day event, the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Wisconsin Women's Network Policy Institutes, the 2017 Mentorship Program, the 2017 Artful Women Art Show & Sale, Women on Topic speaker series, and all other WWN programs, campaigns, and events.

The WWN was featured several times across a variety of media sources in Wisconsin, including radio networks in Madison and Oshkosh, statewide online publications, printed publications, and social media points.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TASK FORCE

Task forces of the Wisconsin Women's Network provide a mechanism for the sharing and coordinating of information on important public policy issues and for taking action. Task forces are authorized by the WWN board in response to issues of importance. All task force chairs and members volunteer their time and efforts to the Wisconsin Women's Network.

Reproductive Rights: Members of the Reproductive Rights Task Force of the Wisconsin Women's Network meet monthly in early 2017 to exchange information and organize around issues related to reproductive freedom. The Task Force works to protect a woman's right to choose and actively promotes public policy initiatives that improve access to reproductive health care. In early 2017, the Reproductive Rights Task Force collaborated and shared information on task force member action alerts and women's health events.

WISCONSIN WOMEN'S NETWORK STAFF AND BOARD

In 2016, the WWN transitioned to become an all-volunteer led and run organization. This continued in 2017, and volunteer efforts are the heart and soul of the organization. The volunteer board of directors and program committees oversee all organizational operations, and develop and execute all programs and fundraising campaigns.

Vicky Selkove continued to lead the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Policy Institutes Since 1998, Vicky has been a fierce, strategic, determined, and passionate advocate for Wisconsin's low-income families and children. For nearly six years, Vicky served as Chief of Staff to a legislator on Wisconsin's budget committee. Vicky is currently the legislative director and lobbyist for a statewide nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services to Wisconsin's poorest residents. Her expertise and knowledge of the legislative process makes her a vital asset to the Policy Institute moving forward.

In 2017, the WWN engaged a Project Coordinator to handle all logistical details for the 2017-18 Policy Institute. A past Policy Institute participant, Lynnsey Erickson, was selected for the role. Lynnsey is a former AmeriCorps volunteer and is currently a Health Educator and Coalition Coordinator with the Winnebago County Health Department.

Vicky and Lynnsey are aided by team mentors who offer key instructional support: Adrienne Gilbert Ramirez with XCEL Energy; Mary Matthias, former Principle Attorney at the Wisconsin Legislative Council; JoAnna Richard, Vocational Rehabilitation Special Projects Coordinator at the Department of Workforce Development and Middleton City Council Member; Wenona Wolf, Communications and Development Manager at Kids Forward; Lacy Fox, Communications Director for WI State Senator Chris Larson; Maggie Gau with Tony Evers for Wisconsin; and Jill Jacklitz, Director of Education at UW-Madison Center for Patient Partnerships.

The WWN Policy Committee will play a key role in helping coordinate and plan the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Policy Institutes. Policy committee members include Kara Pennoyer (chair), Tressie Kamp, Karen Meulendyke, Lacy Fox, Jenifer Cole, Amy Williamson, Ariana Stillman, Bianca Shaw, Davette Baker, T.R. Williams, Kanasha Byrd, Becky Steinbach, Elise Buchbinder, Kathy Gale, Kira Stewart, and Kristen Burki.

During spring 2017, the WWN engaged an intern through the UW-Madison Gender and Women's Studies Internship program. Intern Anna Blasco completed grant-funding research and conducted an independent project that identified crucial funding sources. Also, Anna was instrumental in submitting the 2017 Evjue Foundation application, which awarded the WWN \$3,000 for the Policy Institute.

Katherine Dellenbach served as the WWN representative on the Board of Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW) in 2017. She has played an important role serving as the liaison between CSW and the WWN Board of Directors.

WWN holds a huge debt of gratitude to all 2017 volunteers, contractors, and interns, without whom the WWN would not be able to successfully implement so many crucial programs for women in Wisconsin.

The Board of Directors schedules meetings monthly. Members of the board serve two-year terms. Members of the 2017 Board of Directors were:

Jenifer Cole, President
Sara Dillivan-Graves, Vice-President
Katherine Dellenbach, Past-President
Karyl Rice, Treasurer
Kate Rifken, Administrative Chair
Wenona Wolf, Advancement Chair
Blair Brophy, Communications Chair
Kara Pennoyer, Public Policy Chair
Lacy Fox, Special Events Chair
Lily Johnson, Member at Large
Tressie Kamp, Member at Large
Karen Meulendyke, Member at Large
Kira Stewart, Member at Large
Nicole Vafadari, Member at Large

At the December 2017 meeting of the WWN Board of directors a budget was adopted and elections were held

for open positions on the Board of Directors.

FINANCIAL STATUS

Outside of grants for designated activities, revenues in 2016 were chiefly derived from fundraising campaigns, direct mail appeals, Community Shares of Wisconsin, donations, and special events. Expenses in 2017 included special events, professional fees, administration, rent, insurance, postage, printing, supplies, telephone, website, and e-mail, and Community Shares dues. Wisconsin Women's Network is fiscally sound, maintaining a Reserve Account with funds equaling more than 6-months operating expenses. A CPA conducts an audit of the Wisconsin Women's Network annually.

A copy of this report will be available to the public on the Wisconsin Women's Network's website: wiwomensnetwork.org.

Jen Cole
President, Wisconsin Women's Network
December 6, 2017