

Cultural & Self-Identity

Safety & Violence  
Prevention

Financial Stability & Prosperity

Education &  
Lifelong Learning

Health & Wellness

Family & Caregiving

Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota

# blueprint for action

NOVEMBER 2017





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SECTION I:

# Introduction

*Blueprint for Action,*  
**Young Women's Initiative  
of Minnesota**



## Open Letter from the Women's Foundation of Minnesota and Governor's Office of the State of Minnesota

Dear Minnesotans:

Last October, we launched the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota (YWI MN). This effort is the nation's first of its kind statewide initiative aimed at improving equity and opportunities for and with young women.

The YWI MN focuses on young women between the ages of 12 and 24, from eight demographic communities across Minnesota that face opportunity gaps, including African American, African Immigrant, American Indian, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latina, LGBTQ\*, Disabilities, and Greater Minnesota young women.

With the direction and the active leadership of young women, we worked with nonprofits, businesses, governments, and philanthropic organizations over 12 months to develop recommendations for how to ensure opportunity, safety, and leadership for all young women in the state.

The result of this work is the *Blueprint for Action*. The *Blueprint* includes 20 recommendations for achieving equity in outcomes, access to equal opportunities, and safe, prosperous lives for young women in Minnesota.

We are thankful for the wisdom, leadership, and collaboration the Governor-appointed Young Women's Cabinet (see p. 6) has shown in creating the *Blueprint* recommendations. Young women will remain the key drivers of this important work during the next six years (2023).

We thank our partners at the University of Minnesota's Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center for providing excellent research on community engagement. We are also grateful to the YWCA St. Paul for providing leadership development to the Young Women's Cabinet (see p. 53).

We thank the 70 cross-sector leaders of the Governor-appointed Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota Council (see p. 52), who are already working in partnership with the Cabinet to move the *Blueprint* recommendations forward.

Lastly, we thank every individual who participated on a community-specific working group (see p. 9) or as part of the process in any way.

The *Blueprint for Action* is only the beginning, and we have much work to do to fulfill the promise that every young woman in Minnesota has the opportunity to be and do her best (see *Next Steps*, p. 45). To succeed, all Minnesotans need to step up; the success of all young women will benefit all Minnesotans.

We invite you to engage with the *Blueprint's* recommendations and the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota. Your partnership will help us build a Minnesota where every girl has the opportunity to thrive and is the champion of her own life.

Sincerely,

**Governor Mark Dayton**  
**Lt. Governor Tina Smith**  
Governor's Office  
of the State of Minnesota

**Lee Roper-Batker**  
President and CEO,  
Women's Foundation of Minnesota

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\* Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer



## Open Letter from the Young Women's Cabinet

On behalf of the 25 members of the Young Women's Cabinet, we are honored to deliver the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota's (YWI MN) *Blueprint for Action*, a road map to a Minnesota where every girl has the opportunity to thrive and is the champion of her own life.

Ensuring a prosperous Minnesota for all, not just for some, has been a powerful goal for us as young women leaders and members of the Governor-appointed Cabinet.

The *Blueprint's* 20 recommendations represent our lived experiences as young women from eight vibrant, diverse Minnesota communities – African American, African Immigrant, American Indian, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latina, LGBTQ, Disabilities, and Greater Minnesota – and our shared commitment to a future that ensures opportunity, safety, and leadership for all young women.

It has been a remarkable and transformative experience serving on the community-specific working groups and on the Cabinet. We worked with young women and adult leaders from within our communities and outside of it – across communities, across cultures, across identities, and across sectors.

We thank the Women's Foundation of Minnesota and Governor's Office of the State of Minnesota for co-leading the YWI MN and seeing us as the solution-builders and leaders we are. Working within our communities and together, the YWI MN will benefit all Minnesotans.

Our participation in the *Blueprint* is the result of a community action research process led by the University of Minnesota's Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) and leadership development shared with Cabinet members by the YWCA St. Paul. We thank UROC, the community-specific working groups, and YWCA St. Paul for their work to help us surface the unique challenges and solutions within our communities and for providing guidance as we rose as leaders.

The Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota is grounded in research. And as young women from these eight communities, we know well the barriers to our success. We also know we are so much more than statistics, percentages, and charts. The disparities in outcomes do not define us, limit our potential, or determine our future.

The *Blueprint* is built upon our assets – the powerful community and cultural strengths we already have as young women. We are brilliant, entrepreneurial, inventive leaders within our families, schools, and communities. We are ready to make life the best it can be for ourselves, our families and communities, and the next generation.

We look forward to partnering next with the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota Council to sequence the *Blueprint's* recommendations and move them forward. The opportunity to learn and lead as equal partners with cross-sector leaders will ensure the success of the YWI MN and achievement of all 20 *Blueprint* recommendations over the next six years.

Our hope is that every community, company, school, organization, policymaker, agency, and Minnesotan will engage with the *Blueprint* recommendations to find the areas where they can be champions for and with young women.

Ultimately, the *Blueprint for Action* points to our hope for the future. Now, it's time for us to work together as one Minnesota.

**Are you ready? We are.**

Sincerely,

**Young Women's Cabinet**

Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota

## Young Women's Cabinet



2017/2018 Young Women's Cabinet (pictured L-R): Front row: Rakeb Max, Olivia Kalthoff, Brook LaFloe, Katelyn Vue, Governor Mark Dayton, Nashel' Bebeau, Ling Debellis, Lee Roper-Batker (CEO & President, Women's Foundation of Minnesota), Jaime Tincer (Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Mark Dayton & Lt. Gov. Tina Smith); Second row: Deena Zubulake (Director of Housing & Youth Programs, YWCA St Paul), Eron Godi, Raie Gessesse, Anika Ahluwalia, Alaysha McCall-Davis, Winona Goodthunder, Hope Hoffman, Grace Espinoza, Vanessa Goodthunder (Aide to the Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Mark Dayton & Lt. Gov. Tina Smith); Third row: Saanii Hernandez (Vice President, Women's Foundation of Minnesota), Katherine Santamaria-Mendez, Haleigh Ortmeier-Clarke, LuLu Regules Verduzco, Lulete Mola (Director of Community Impact, Women's Foundation of Minnesota); Top row: Brianne LaDuke, Aamira Redd, Anna Singhathip, Cierra Wittner, Andrea Duarte-Alonso, Kalice Allen (Reatha Clark King Fellow, Women's Foundation of Minnesota). Not pictured: Nena Abosi, Mys Helen Martin, Teighlor McGee, Amal Muse.

### YOUNG WOMEN'S CABINET 2017/2018:

**Nena Abosi**  
St. Paul, MN

**Anika Ahluwalia**  
St. Paul, MN

**Nashel' Bebeau**  
Deer River, MN

**Ling Debellis**  
North Oaks, MN

**Andrea Duarte-Alonso**  
St. Paul, MN

**Grace Espinoza**  
St. Cloud, MN

**Raie Gessesse**  
Cottage Grove, MN

**Eron Godi**  
Rochester, MN

**Winona Goodthunder**  
Lower Sioux Indian Community  
Morton, MN

**Hope Hoffman**  
Champlin, MN

**Olivia Kalthoff**  
Mahtomedi, MN

**Brianne LaDuke**  
Warroad, MN

**Brook LaFloe**  
St. Paul, MN

**Mys Helen Martin**  
St. Paul, MN

**Rakeb Max**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Alaysha McCall-Davis**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Teighlor McGee**  
St. Paul, MN

**Amal Muse**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Haleigh Ortmeier-Clarke**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Aamira Redd**  
St. Paul, MN

**Lulu Regules Verduzco**  
Farmington, MN

**Katherine Santamaria-Mendez**  
St. Paul, MN

**Anna Singhathip**  
Brooklyn Park, MN

**Katelyn Vue**  
St. Paul, MN

**Cierra Wittner**  
Bemidji, MN

### YOUNG WOMEN'S CABINET 2016/2017:

**Nena Abosi**  
St. Paul, MN

**Andrea Duarte-Alonso**  
Worthington, MN

**Grace Espinoza**  
St. Cloud, MN

**Kava Garcia Vasquez**  
St. Paul, MN

**Raie Gessesse**  
Cottage Grove, MN

**Vanessa Goodthunder**  
Morton, MN

**Soulita Her**  
St. Paul, MN

**Hope Hoffman**  
Champlin, MN

**Brianne LaDuke**  
Warroad, MN

**Brook LaFloe**  
St. Paul, MN

**Kay Lah**  
Cottage Grove, MN

**Wendy Lorenzo-Sanchez**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Rachel Larson**  
Andover, MN

**Grace Maruska**  
St. Paul, MN

**Adrianne Miller-Ball**  
Oakdale, MN

**Silver Moran-Stewart**  
St. Paul, MN

**Amal Muse**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Taiwo Ogunedji**  
St. Paul, MN

**Haleigh Ortmeier-Clark**  
Slayton, MN

**Yesenia Salazar**  
Richfield, MN

**Asante Samuels**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Katherine Santamaria-Mendez**  
St. Paul, MN

**Eleanor Sherman**  
Minneapolis, MN

**Anna Singhathip**  
Brooklyn Park, MN



# Overview & Framework

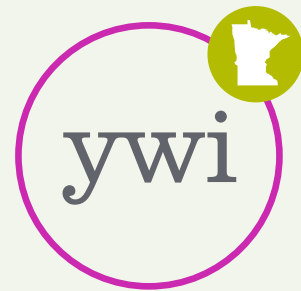
## About the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota

The Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota (YWI MN) is a statewide public-private partnership between the Women's Foundation of Minnesota and the Governor's Office of the State of Minnesota. Launched in October 2016, the YWI MN is driven by a powerful cross-sector partnership of nonprofits, businesses, government, researchers, higher education professionals, philanthropies, and young women\* themselves to build and ensure equity in outcomes for all young women in the state. We are united behind a common goal: **a Minnesota where every girl has the opportunity to thrive and is the champion of her own life.**

**As a catalyst, convener, connector, and collaborator, the Women's Foundation of Minnesota (Women's Foundation) will invest \$9 million through 2023 in research, grantmaking, policy, field-building, and strategic communications to drive implementation of the YWI MN.**

### THROUGH THE YOUNG WOMEN'S INITIATIVE OF MINNESOTA, WE WILL:

- Engage young women to build the statewide *Blueprint for Action*
- Research gaps and spotlight structural barriers
- Connect, build, and sustain strong partnerships
- Enable programming and best practices
- Change systems to increase access to opportunities and equity in outcomes
- Inspire innovative work and policy change
- Increase resources to ensure equity for young women
- Engage and mobilize the public as partners-in-change
- Create a Prosperity & Well-Being Index to measure our success



The Women's Foundation made significant grants to two organizations to work with young women and their communities to create the YWI MN *Blueprint for Action*.

- **YWCA St. Paul:** To provide leadership development and stipends to the Young Women's Cabinet (Cabinet) comprised of 25 young women (ages 16-24) from eight culturally specific communities: African American, African Immigrant, American Indian, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latina, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer), young women with disabilities, and young women from Greater Minnesota. Cabinet members also participated in one of the eight community-specific working groups.
- **University of Minnesota's Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC):** To develop and run an intensive community action research engagement process and manage project implementation. As part of this process, UROC managed the eight community-specific working groups charged with identifying the challenges and the opportunities facing Minnesota's young women.

The Governor's Office of the State of Minnesota appointed two core committees to move the *Blueprint for Action* forward after the launch of the Young Women's Initiative in 2016:

- **Young Women's Cabinet:** The Young Women's Cabinet (see p. 6), comprised of 25 young women and youth leaders (ages 16-24) from the eight identified communities, is charged with ensuring that the work of the Council stays grounded in the lived experiences of the young women and youth from each community and the community-specific challenges and solutions identified.
- **Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota Council:** The Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota Council (see p. 52) comprises 70 cross-sector leaders from elected office, higher education, business, philanthropy, and the community. Three young women co-chairs from the Young Women's Cabinet also sit on the Council. The purpose of the Council will be to sequence the statewide *Blueprint for Action* and to inspire and catalyze resources to move it forward.

\*Woman: Anyone who identifies as a woman, inclusive of cisgender, transgender, gender non-conforming, and gender non-binary people.

## Young Women Today: Why the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota is Needed

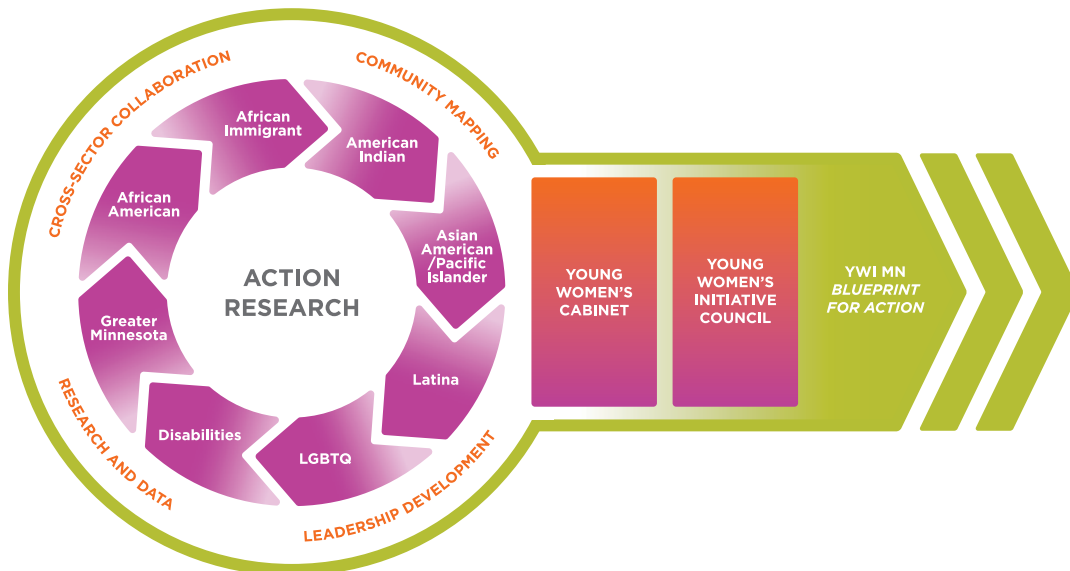
Data show that women in Minnesota, when compared to men, experience inequities in income, health outcomes, and rates of violence. The data also show that many young women in Minnesota are on a firm path to prosperity and well-being, with the supports, connections, and resources they need to thrive.

However, when the data are disaggregated, they show that some young women endure a disproportionate share of hardships and face barriers resulting from multiple intersecting forms of inequity, including gender, race, place, poverty, ability, and sexuality. As a result, many young women are unable to reach their full potential and Minnesota loses a vital source of talent, creativity, economic activity, and leaders of the future.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to creating a world where all young women can thrive. A new approach to gender equity is needed that encompasses all aspects of young women's identities – their communities, cultures, and experiences – with a lens that sees and shows the ways identities intersect to shape outcomes.

This intersectional challenge requires aligned and coordinated action across sectors, including public, private, community, and individual. Further, targeted solutions are needed to reach the universal goal of equal opportunity, so all young women can thrive.

The Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota was designed by the Women's Foundation with young women at the center and as key drivers of the work. Through a rigorous action research process conducted by UROC and a team of young women researchers, the YWI MN developed the *Blueprint for Action* to drive targeted and cross-sector solutions tailored specifically to those young women whom data show face the biggest barriers.



## YWI MN Action Research Engagement Methods

To ground the Initiative in the lived experiences of young women and the community-specific challenges and solutions they identified, the Women's Foundation made a grant to UROC to develop an action research process focused on young women from eight communities that experience the greatest disparities in outcomes in our state: African American, African Immigrant, American Indian, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latina, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer), young women with disabilities, and young women in Greater Minnesota.

The research was led by Dr. Lauren Martin and Makeda Zulu-Gillespie, directors of research and community outreach at UROC, with a team of 13 research assistants – the majority of whom were young women students at the University of Minnesota. Each member of the team had deep connections to the eight communities of YWI MN. Research leaders at UROC hired a team with a wide range of skills, experiences, and community connections so that young women's leadership was central to the research engagement process including research design, gathering data, conducting analysis, and participating in writing.

### Three data collection strategies were employed between December 10, 2016 and March 24, 2017:

- 1 **Eight Community-Specific Working Groups:** There were 89 working group members who worked with girls and young women in their communities including 24 Cabinet members - representing eight communities - who met in their community groups three times for facilitated conversations. The working groups surfaced key barriers, strengths, and community-based themes to guide the *Blueprint* framework and content. The Cabinet grounded the work in the direct lived experience of young women.
- 2 **Interviews:** UROC used purposeful sampling techniques to interview 161 individuals and groups in each community by connecting to community networks. The goal was to surface wisdom and experience from as many diverse experiences as possible to guide the *Blueprint for Action*.
- 3 **Online Survey:** UROC developed an online survey (based on the interview); more than 332 people submitted a survey.

### Two questions drove the action research process:

- 1 What does it mean for young women in your community to thrive?
- 2 What barriers do young women in your community face?

The process was guided by a focus on assets – those things that are working well for young women including strengths, resources, hard work, role models, people, programs and organizations, behaviors and practices, and cultural norms and expectations.

Overall, the action research process engaged over 500 young women (aged 16-24) and community members from eight distinct communities. All data was analyzed using constant-comparison analysis and thematic coding to sift the data points into concrete recommendations. The process was iterative; UROC developed *Blueprint* components and showed them to each working group and the Cabinet for input, changes, and course corrections. The research team, including young women from the eight communities, conducted analysis and write-up collaboratively to center the voices and knowledge of young women within the research process. This process allowed more people to engage in analysis and design.

The *Blueprint* development process, by using these methods, was designed to be participatory, asset-focused, and community-grounded so that actions would flow from strengths and community-identified challenges and barriers.

## Research Environmental Scan

As part of the preparatory work for the YWI MN action research, UROC developed a short data brief to explore disaggregated data on several key outcomes in each of the eight communities to identify areas of greatest gaps.

Existing public and private secondary data is not typically set up to allow for intersectional analysis. The American Community Survey (ACS) was identified as a data source that would allow for disaggregated analysis. The population of women in the eight communities was estimated and young women's outcomes by race/ethnicity for educational attainment, income at age 24, and access to health insurance was analyzed. Disparities were found among women by race/ethnicity and whether they resided in rural or urban areas.

The data show that when compared to the overall average of all young women in Minnesota, young women of color have lower income, a greater educational opportunity gap, and lower rates of health insurance coverage. However, each community has variations and strengths that will help shape community-rooted solutions.

UROC obtained ACS data to help describe barriers for young women with disabilities, but was unable to obtain comparable data to help describe those same barriers for LGBTQ young women. Likewise, many indicators of interest cannot be adequately measured right now, because the data do not exist or are not extant in the correct format and variables. A next step for the YWI MN is to catalogue data needs to identify and gather relevant secondary sources to deepen the analysis provided here, as well as new data to be created, as needed.

## Seven Best Practices for Action

The action research process discerned seven best practices for action. These include approaches and themes that all communities surfaced as critical to the ethos that animates our implementation of the recommendations.

- 1 Young women and their communities should be centered in the process.
- 2 Showcasing individual role models and examples of thriving women from diverse communities for each recommendation will help inspire the change.
- 3 Outcomes for young women are shaped by the successes of families and communities so the recommendations require multi-generational solutions.
- 4 The impact of the biases of gender, race, place, class, sexuality, and ability embedded in our institutions, practices, and policies needs to be acknowledged.
- 5 Social change is iterative and evolving. We try something, learn, change, and retry until we get it right.
- 6 Solutions and “problems” are found in the same place.
- 7 Shared accountability: we are all potentially part of the solution.

Information surfaced in the action research process indicates that these best practices for “how” to do the work will help the recommendations achieve the desired outcomes.

## Blueprint for Action Framework and Recommendations for Action

The qualitative data highlight persistent gender equity issues. Overall, women make less money than men, experience cultural norms and expectations that limit their dreams, bear most responsibility for family and caregiving, and experience violence (sexual, interpersonal, emotional, and physical). These issues are compounded when we look at gender in combination with race, LGBTQ status, ability, class, and place.

Across the eight communities where young women in Minnesota experience the greatest disparities in outcomes, insights from the working groups and Cabinet yielded fresh and innovative approaches to these seemingly intractable issues of inequity. The targeted solutions, grounded in the unique lived experiences of young women and informed by community, resulted in the **Blueprint for Action**. UROC prepared a companion report to the *Blueprint for Action*, “Action Research Engagement Process: Community-Based Knowledge for the Young Women’s Initiative of Minnesota,” to share additional qualitative findings about the environmental context in Minnesota, community-specific wisdom, and the impacts of daily experiences of inequity. The additional topics surfaced included transportation, food insecurity, police brutality, immigration policy and narratives, Eurocentric beauty standards, and more. This report is available at the UROC website (<http://uroc.umn.edu/young-womens-initiative-minnesota>).

The qualitative data from the action research suggests that the following six interconnected areas of action are necessary for young women to thrive.

 Financial Stability & Prosperity

 Cultural & Self-Identity

 Safety & Violence Prevention

 Health & Wellness

 Education & Lifelong learning

 Family & Caregiving

Together, six areas serve as the framework for the *Blueprint for Action* and recommendations:

- 1 **FINANCIAL STABILITY & PROSPERITY:**  
Young women have financial stability and pathways to prosperity.
- 2 **SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION:**  
Young women feel safe and free from all forms of violence at home, school, work, and in the community.
- 3 **EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING:**  
Young women have access to formal education and the life skills training needed to make sound decisions and engage in planning for the future.
- 4 **CULTURAL & SELF-IDENTITY:**  
Young women have a supportive community with positive role models and a strong cultural and self-identity.
- 5 **HEALTH & WELLNESS:**  
Young women are physically and emotionally healthy.
- 6 **FAMILY & CAREGIVING:**  
Young women are free to pursue their dreams in ways that honor their personal, family, and caregiving responsibilities.

For young women in Minnesota, gender inequity is combined and compounded due to inequities by race, class, sexual orientation, place, and disabilities. The data suggests that we cannot achieve gender equity without also addressing these other biases. Widespread harmful social narratives, myths, and lack of basic knowledge about race/ethnicity, ability, and LGBTQ status create barriers for young women and their communities that impact their self-identities and limit opportunity and economic well-being.

The process also surfaced hundreds of people, programs, and organizations across Minnesota who have supported and assisted young women in each of the eight communities achieve their goals. However, these bright spots are typically disparate and unconnected, under-funded, lacking in broad social support, working against the odds, not coordinated or to scale, and in some cases, hidden and underground. These assets are not yet capitalized upon and brought to scale for all young women.

The *Blueprint for Action* builds upon the tremendous community and cultural strengths young women already possess. Minnesota's young women are smart, resourceful, innovative, entrepreneurial, leaders, role models, pillars of their families and communities, and have big dreams for their futures. Through the *Blueprint for Action*, we will close the disparities in outcomes and ensure that all young women in Minnesota can thrive.





## SECTION II:

# Recommendations

### ACROSS ALL ACTION AREAS

1. Build on Assets
2. Disaggregate Key Data
3. Reframe Harmful Narratives

### FINANCIAL STABILITY & PROSPERITY

4. Build Gender and Community-Oriented Financial Literacy and Life Skills
5. Enhance Career Pathways

### SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION

6. Increase Awareness of Violence Against Young Women
7. Expand Housing Options
8. Increase Services for Survivors of Violence

### EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

9. Develop Young Women Leaders
10. Create Accurate/Representative Curriculum
11. Build a Better Post-Secondary Pipeline
12. Increase Diversity of K-12 Staff (+ Training)

### CULTURAL & SELF-IDENTITY

13. Ensure Community Spaces and Conversations
14. Respect and Teach Multiple Languages

### HEALTH & WELLNESS

15. Increase Access to Women's Health Care
16. Increase Mental Health Support
17. Prevent Violence through Healthy Relationships

### FAMILY & CAREGIVING

18. Increase Access to Childcare
19. Change Gender and Generational Roles
20. Facilitate Holistic Mentorship







ACTION AREA:

# Across All Action Areas

*“Girls come home from school and still have to cook and clean. We need boys to share that responsibility too. Everybody needs to be part of changing gender norms.”*

– Young Women’s Cabinet member



## 1. Build on Assets

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Conduct a thorough environmental scan across the state to identify existing efforts to support young women in Minnesota.*

The research engagement process identified many key features of positive organizations and programs. These include being culturally-grounded; creating safe spaces for participants; designed, informed and led by people from their community; integrating positive self-identity and awareness; being strengths-based and nonjudgmental.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive when they locate and access specific services and supports that honor and build upon on their heritage, history, needs, and community.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Our process identified hundreds of organizations and programs in Minnesota that are important and impactful in the lives of young women. Many are under-funded, hidden, or marginalized.
- Young women indicated that some mainstream services and supports do not work for them. Due to lack of access (money, transportation, timing, location, etc.) and lack of cultural/experiential fit, the staff are perceived as judgmental or young women are not aware of programs available to them.
- Our society – and many communities – have limiting beliefs about what young women can and should do for education and careers. This can limit available program options.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- There are already hundreds of programs, groups, and individuals working to improve the future for young women.
- Young women and their communities have a shared understanding of the intersecting and complementary definitions of success and prosperity.
- Minnesota has strong community leaders and role models.
- Our communities have a sense of identity and well-defined values, priorities, and action areas for improvement.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Many resources and programs are located in the Twin Cities. Greater Minnesotans and some other communities report fewer tangible assets currently (community organizations, programs, etc.), and greater isolation

from the programs and organizations that are more concentrated in the metro areas.

- Each community holds its own definition of what “success” means.
- There is a need to identify the gaps in services and culturally-specific work tailored to young women in many communities, including young women with disabilities.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Produce a report on documented programs and efforts that currently support young women.
- Conduct an internal scan of all state agencies to identify programs and efforts that support young women.
- Encourage existing partner/department efforts focused on racial and economic equity to add a disability, gender, sexuality, and geographic lens to their work.



## 2. Disaggregate Key Data

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Make it a standard practice for institutions to disaggregate data by gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, income, sexuality, disability, and place.*

The research engagement process surfaced a need for statewide data that can be disaggregated to drive efforts to create equity in outcomes for all young women in Minnesota. Most state agencies collect some, but not yet all the necessary data. Most state agencies report some disaggregated data, but not necessarily in ways that help identify intersectional areas where more or different approaches are needed. Other sectors can also collect and report data that is more disaggregated. There can be significant challenges to reporting data at more levels of specificity. The recommendation is about encouraging more understanding of intersectionality through disaggregation of data.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive when we can better direct efforts by identifying the areas of greatest disparity and needs that affect them.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Hidden or invisible groups within marginalized groups; too little disaggregation covers potential pockets of disparity.
- Myths and misunderstandings about how different groups are doing vis-à-vis other groups.
- Many individuals are reluctant to disclose demographic information. Reasons can include wanting privacy, having a lack of trust for why the information is being collected and how it will be used, and not wanting to be singled out.
- There is a lack of agreement on basic demographic categories. They are socially constructed and usually blurry around the edges. Some people do not want to be put in a box or labeled. It is difficult for individuals who identify with more than one community or identity to choose one, yet it is hard to report on data when people can pick multiple categories.
- Some demographic information that may be important to know could be dangerous or harmful for the individual to share.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Robust data collected by state agencies.
- Numerous projects for sharing data already exist (e.g., Minn-Link at the University of Minnesota, Wilder's Minnesota Compass, Hennepin County SHAPE, and many more).

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Certain communities can face stigma and potentially negative consequences for self-identifying in a demographic form.
- Identification as "undocumented" could lead to significant harm.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Institutions develop an intersectional analysis for data provided on their websites that allows for users to cross-tabulate gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, income level, sexuality, disability, and place or geography.
- Institutions implement data tracking practices to determine which services are being accessed by specific groups; then, targeted efforts can be made to better serve underserved populations.



### 3. Reframe Harmful Narratives

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Promote messages that ensure young women can experience the world without limitations.*

The research engagement process described a dominant culture filled with harmful narratives about young women, specifically young women of color, American Indian young women, young women with disabilities, immigrant young women, and LGBTQ young people. Young women want to hear stories and see cultural narratives that accurately reflect their lives, identities, and communities. Data collected in this process is clear that young women do not feel respected, heard, and seen by the dominant cultural narratives in Minnesota and the United States.

#### OUTCOME:

Young women are thriving when they are not subjected to biases based on gender, race, place, income, sexuality, ability, or age that stem from harmful social narratives.

#### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Discrimination, racialized stereotypes, gender norms and expectations, and sexism are problems that are not always recognized by society at large.
- Young women and communities can internalize racism, ableism, and sexism to oppress other women across multicultural communities.
- An understanding of differences between generational experiences with harmful narratives must be recognized.
- The idea of a model minority means that society interprets outwardly assimilated minorities as “good” and all others as “bad.”

#### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Youth have the ability to discern and navigate multiple realities.
- Cultural resources should allow youth to protect and build their own identities.

#### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- This touches every community in very different, negative ways that maintain harmful stereotypes, self-hatred, and limiting beliefs.

#### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Develop stories with communities that share the lived experiences of young women.**
- **Invest in reframing narratives to focus on young women’s assets.**



ACTION AREA:

# Financial Stability & Prosperity

*“I want to be able to go to college, but  
I don’t have the financial stability.  
I am providing for my family and  
I don’t even have my own yet.”*

– Young Women’s Cabinet member



## 4. Build Gender and Community-Oriented Financial Literacy and Life Skills

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Ensure young women have access to community-specific opportunities for training and education on financial literacy, life skills, and entrepreneurialism tailored to young women, which are built on cultural, linguistic, community, and geographic assets.*

The research engagement process reviewed secondary data from the American Community Survey (ACS) that was compiled by UROC as well as other secondary data and personal experiences that document and describe a significant pay gap between women and men, particularly in Greater MN, communities of color, American Indian communities, immigrant communities, and young women with disabilities. Participants in the process explored and discussed the roots of the pay gap and identified a lack of regular access to financial literacy training, life skills, and entrepreneurialism as part of their formal and informal education. Many young women may also not have access to knowledge about why these skills are important for future opportunities.

### OUTCOME:

Young women have the skills and knowledge to be financially stable and independent. They can manage money, use credit wisely, save for the future, plan and finance their education, and build a career. When young women are financially stable, they are less vulnerable to economic instability, coercion, and exploitation and can care for themselves and those who depend on them.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- The generational gap, racial and gender-based discrimination, and structural barriers for families to attain financial stability means that some young women may not learn these skills at home.
- Without knowledge, skills, and role models, young women are missing some of the basic skills necessary for finding a job, saving money, making sound financial decisions, accessing capital and loans, and building economic and family stability.
- Financial literacy and life skills are foundational and necessary particularly for homeless youth, youth in foster care, and youth in the juvenile justice system.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Young women are hard-working and have an entrepreneurial spirit.
- Young women often provide unpaid labor to their families and friends for childcare, housework, and mutual support.
- Many young women work multiple jobs, including start-ups and home businesses, such as jewelry-making, hair, cooking, and more.
- We have some model programs in Minnesota that are a place to start.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Visa holders, refugees, and undocumented immigrants face unique financial and job challenges, so they need something tailored to them.
- Some religious groups have rules against credit and borrowing.
- The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) allows employers to hire people with certain types of disabilities at wage rates below the statutory minimum; specifically individuals who the employer defines as having earning or productive capacities that are impaired by mental, physical, and cognitive disabilities.
- Specific needs may vary within and between communities, and learning opportunities should be customized to these variations. For example, several communities represent a wide array of ethnicities, cultures, and communities of origin that may need knowledge and skill-building relevant to their unique experiences.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Ensure financial literacy courses for all young women in middle school, including basic financial management skills like banking, saving, stocks and bonds, credit cards, taxes, and more.**
- **Create workshops offered in multiple languages for all students and their caregivers, including Visa holders and undocumented students, with a focus on FAFSA, scholarships, and college loans.**
- **Incentivize colleges and universities to offer workshops for continuing financial literacy skills, including debt repayment, home ownership, accounting, and entrepreneurship.**



## 5. Enhance Career Pathways

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Ensure young women have opportunities and pathways to high-skill, high-wage careers and jobs; increase participation in STEM fields and technical careers; and increase opportunities and pay for young women in female-dominated employment sectors.*

The research engagement process found that young women want to work in fulfilling jobs that pay a living wage, but many lack access to coordinated opportunities that foster aspirational goal-setting combined with exposure to working environments and mentors in diverse career fields. There is a significant pay gap for women compared to men, and even greater pay gaps for women in communities of color, American Indian communities, immigrant communities, LGBTQ and gender non-conforming individuals, young women with disabilities, and young women in Greater Minnesota. According to our research engagement process, many young women in these communities do not have regular access to career building opportunities designed specifically for girls and young women, such as summer work programs, paid internships, career days, job shadowing, and career mentorship programs. They may not have adults who can connect them to careers or provide them with necessary knowledge and connections. Gender norms and expectations can also limit young women's ability to dream and set their own course.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive with access to opportunity and pathways to good, high-paying jobs leading to financial stability, time for caregiving and family, and the ability to pass down wealth through generations.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Many young women do not have adequate access to knowledge, resources, opportunities, and supports for entry and advancement into high-paying careers of their choosing, even though there are some services and supports currently available.
- Young women living in poverty face many barriers to careers due to generational lack of access to many career fields, ability, racial/ethnic discrimination, gender bias, and sexism.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Young women are hard-working and have an entrepreneurial spirit. Often they work multiple jobs trying to get by, including start-ups and home businesses, such as jewelry-making, hairstylist, cooking, and more.
- Young women often provide unpaid labor to their families and friends for childcare, housework, and mutual support, and have already developed many strong skills applicable to a variety of careers.
- There are successful young women in the communities who could serve as role models.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- There are specific barriers for undocumented individuals to participate in work mentorship opportunities.
- Some family and community-specific norms maintain that women should stay in the home and be solely responsible for family caregiving.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Develop and require a class in middle school that fosters pathways to post-secondary education, career planning, and exposure to career options.**
- **Partner with corporations to develop opportunities for advancement.**







ACTION AREA:

# Safety & Violence Prevention

*“Living in a college town, there have already been several reports of sexual assaults this month alone. You can’t walk down the street without being cat-called or harassed. Rape is a common occurrence with little or no justice.”*

– Young Women’s Cabinet member



## 6. Increase Awareness of Violence Against Young Women

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Develop and implement a public awareness campaign to highlight the incidence and everyday impacts of violence against women within specific community contexts, de-stigmatize survivors of gender-based violence, and connect more survivors of violence to services.*

The research engagement process surfaced violence against women as a major concern and impediment to thriving for young women, with impacts across all action areas. Participants described victimization in physical and sexual violence, exploitation, sex trafficking, hate crimes, and murder. This was also reflected in much of the secondary literature. Participants described violence against women including the often overlapping categories of domestic, intimate partner, sexual, physical, and verbal violence. They also described stigma, victim-blaming, and a lack of awareness among victims and the broader community about the impacts of violence on education, health, mental health, career, self-identity, and more.

### OUTCOME:

Young women are thriving when they are free from violence. If they experience violence, they can still thrive when they feel supported by their community and mainstream society.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- There is lack of awareness of services and support offered to survivors of sexual violence.
- Stigma is often attached to using victim services.
- Stigmas about violence vary within and between communities; presently, victim services are not sufficiently tailored to address community-specific stigmas, strengths, and needs.
- Some victim services can re-victimize young women survivors of violent crime.
- There is lack of education and awareness about rape culture and consent in many community areas and spaces.
- Some victims are exploited or trafficked by their domestic/intimate partner or other family members for financial gain.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- American Indian women, and other communities, are taking action to address the missing and murdered women in their communities.

- Increases in lobbying and activism has changed the narrative and led to an expansion of benefits and services for victims and survivors.
- National women's organizations and coalitions have made inroads toward changing the national dialogue on violence against women, but there is more work to do.
- Organizations that serve victims of domestic, sexual, and physical violence, as well as numerous statewide coalitions, offer resources for young women survivors of violence and trafficking.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Focus on education and awareness within all communities about how violence toward women has been normalized.
- Culturally appropriate methods of teaching communities about consent are necessary.
- It can be unsafe for trans and queer youth in many cultures and communities, including within dominant or white communities. There are many anti-LGBTQ sentiments that foster and lead to violence.
- Young women with disabilities experience very high rates of violence.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Create a community-specific awareness campaign focused on removal of barriers to survivors seeking services (e.g. stigmas and inadequately trained staff). It should include building awareness of the following: threats facing women each day; services and support offered to survivors of sexual violence; rape culture and consent in community areas and spaces; and culturally appropriate methods of teaching communities about consent.**
- **Increase advocate outreach and victim services within communities and cultures, including immigrants, refugees, LGBTQ, gender non-conforming people, women in Greater Minnesota, and young women with disabilities.**



## 7. Expand Housing Options

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Increase housing options for young women and their families, including rentals and home ownership opportunities, as well as short, medium, and long-term shelter.

The research engagement process identified safe living conditions for young women and their families as a cornerstone to thriving in all six action areas. However, data shows that young women of color, American Indian young women, immigrant young women, and more experience higher rates of unstable housing and homelessness. Female-headed households are more likely to be renters and pay a higher proportion of their income for housing costs. Home ownership was identified as a pathway to generational financial stability, but many communities of color experience discrimination and a historical legacy of policies that blocked home ownership. Young women need options for stable housing as they grow from childhood into adulthood.

### OUTCOME:

A young woman is thriving when she has access to safe and affordable quality housing. Housing is a cornerstone for financial stability, education, health, safety, and thriving.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Homelessness and the inability to afford or access long-term housing greatly impacts marginalized communities.
- Lack of safe and secure housing options.
- Lack of permanent housing for young women and their families.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Many organizations were mentioned as already doing good work on housing (e.g., OutFront).
- Support and develop housing models that use community-based approaches to helping people access rental and home ownership options.
- In many cultures, it is normal for multiple generations to live in the same household, which can prevent would-be homelessness or provide a temporary solution.
- Since a disproportionate amount of LGBTQ individuals experience homelessness during their lives, informal networks within the LGBTQ community have allowed for individuals to rely on each other when experiencing homelessness.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Communities of color, American Indians, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ young people, and people with disabilities face high rates of homelessness, which impacts young women from these communities.
- Immigrants and refugees face unique barriers in housing due to language, government aid access, and discrimination.
- People with disabilities experiences higher rates of housing discrimination. People with disabilities living with aging caregivers are at risk for homelessness or institutionalization due to shortage of housing and supportive services.
- Transgender people face high rates of homelessness.
- Young women living in abusive/violent environments are at risk of housing insecurity. They may not be able to be financially independent enough to afford safe housing, or shelters might not be able to provide the amount of security and safety they need from the harm of their abusers.
- Young women with disabilities need to have housing options that allow them to live independently with community support.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Ensure shelters and housing options for young women leaving violent/abusive situations.
- Expand Section 8 housing vouchers and financial literacy programs for young women.
- Increase bank and other lending institution support for mortgage packages that serve young women and their families.



## 8. Increase Services for Survivors of Violence

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Increase awareness and supportive services for survivors of abuse and violence with an intersectional lens.*

The research engagement process highlighted the disproportionate impact of sexual, physical, and emotional violence against women and a lack of culturally attuned and community-based services for them. An intersectional lens on violence shows that women of color, American Indian women, LGBTQ young people, immigrant young women, and young women with disabilities experience disproportional violence. Experience of violence and trauma has a cascade effect on all other areas of young women's lives. Conclusive research on adverse childhood experiences shows that experience of violence and trauma has long-term negative impacts if not properly addressed.

### OUTCOME:

Young women are thriving when they are free of violence, including sexual violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, hate crimes, and homicides based on gender identification.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Minnesota needs more services and supports that are holistic, specifically those that directly support survivors from communities of color, American Indian communities, LGBTQ communities, immigrants, and women with disabilities. There are less services in Greater Minnesota.
- There is an over-reliance in Minnesota on one-size-fits-all approaches to survivor support, and a lack of cultural- and community-based services.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Local and national organizations have made tremendous impacts on creating local and national dialogue and action steps to support victims of community-based violence. Some examples include the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, The Link, and National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- Minnesota has been a leader in survivor support. We have skills, knowledge, and networks to build upon.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- There is a lack of services in communities with a high prevalence of poverty and violence.
- Community-based stigmas associated with sexual and domestic violence often prevent eligible individuals from seeking help.
- Anti-LGBTQ sentiments (e.g. homophobia and transphobia) can make it unsafe for trans and queer youth in many cultures and communities, including dominant society.
- Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women in relationships with other women face specific barriers to receiving formal support for leaving abusive relationships with women abusers.
- Specific needs for services and supports for survivors of violence may vary within and between communities. For example, several communities represent a wide array of ethnicities, cultures, and communities of origin that may do better with tailored programs and messages.
- There is a lack of awareness and services designed specifically for young women with disabilities.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Increase partnership between crisis nurseries, women-serving organizations, and behavioral health practitioners to better support women seeking services, support, and healing from trauma and violence.**
- **Create standards of safety in classrooms, the workplace, and homes based on research.**
- **Implement evidence-based, culturally competent curricula on anger management, coping skills, bullying, violence (domestic, emotional, sexual, and physical) and exploitation, to be included in middle and high school health classes. Content and implementation should be vetted by specific communities and geographies.**



ACTION AREA:

# Education & Lifelong Learning

*“When I am learning history in school,  
I never see my culture in the books.  
The teachers ask me to explain my  
culture - I can’t just be a student.”*

– Young Women’s Cabinet member



## 9. Develop Young Women Leaders

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Develop the capacity of young women for political and civic leadership.*

The research engagement process shows that young women desire more opportunities to develop as leaders. Experiential opportunities such as mentorship, education, and outdoor exploration were commonly cited by young women in our working group process. At the same time, young women talked about how they are conditioned from birth to avoid asserting leadership because they do not want to seem like they are violating gender norms by being authoritative. When young women receive leadership development, they thrive and carry positive ideas about themselves and other women. This confidence translates into strong, positive advocacy for themselves, their communities, and across communities different than their own.

### OUTCOME:

Young women are thriving when they have access to leadership opportunities and when they believe they can be leaders. Having the confidence and opportunities to speak up allows everyone to benefit from the ideas and strengths that young women have.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Women in Minnesota do not yet have equal representation in leadership in all levels of government, business, and nonprofits.
- Lack of representation of diverse types of young women leaders doing diverse things.
- Lack of women in politics means that young women are not involved in important decisions around institutional changes.
- (Intersectional) gender wage gaps and financial instability hinder women and young women in leadership development.
- Educational disparities such as diploma/degree attainment and discriminatory educational policies.
- Health disparities for young women and insufficient health care.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Young women leaders already exist, leading innovative work within their communities and community at large.
- The YWCA of St. Paul and UROC have been supporting leadership development among young women as part of the YWI MN action planning process.
- Young women from all different backgrounds and experiences bring valuable knowledge to any profession or field.
- Cultural models of community building and leadership have worked for many generations. We can look to cultural models of leadership to inform leadership development.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Geographic isolation in Greater Minnesota can prevent young women from resources and opportunities to develop leadership.
- Cultures each hold different beliefs about the expectations of and gender roles for young women. Young women learn how to navigate the gendered expectations from their individual communities as well as the larger society.
- Leadership development is often rooted in ability, such as the physical or mental labor expected from a young woman leader. Strategies for building leadership should normalize the different abilities all leaders bring to the table and normalize leaders with disabilities.
- Transgender women are still invalidated as women, so their successes as leaders are dismissed through transgender misogyny.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Develop tiered mentorship programs to expose young women to a variety of role models at different life stages.**
- **Support existing efforts to educate and prepare women for leadership roles.**
- **Increase the representation of young women from all communities in politics and government to reflect each community's interests.**



## 10. Create Accurate/Representative Curriculum

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Create accurate and representative cultural and historical education at the K-12 level that reflects the diversity of the country, both past and present.*

The research engagement process identified education as one of the strongest themes. Most participants see education as a cornerstone to future success for young women and have high educational aspirations. Great experiences in schools were described, but many young women from diverse and rural communities in our process described school experiences that were harmful. They shared multiple experiences of misunderstandings and judgement, bias and discrimination. Many felt their cultures and communities are not respected in school settings. The content of educational curricula in Minnesota was deemed deficient in several key ways; participants cited a lack of curricular focus on accurate history, historical trajectories, and social movements of people of color, American Indians, the LGBTQ community, and people with disabilities. Participants suggest this impacts self-understanding and leads to false and harmful social narratives about them in the dominant culture. They believe that gaps in the public education system lead to a general population-level lack of knowledge and understanding of people of color, American Indians, immigrants of color, LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people, and people with disabilities, and at its worst, microaggressions and hate-based discrimination.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive when they see themselves and their communities positively and accurately reflected in school textbooks, curricula, and teaching. Learning the accurate histories and cultural understandings of people of color, American Indians, immigrants, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities will help Minnesotans better understand and respect one another.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Broad cultural misunderstanding of histories of diverse groups.
- Many young women from our communities feel excluded and marginalized from schools and dominant society.

- Participants cited a lack of curricular focus on what they identified as accurate history and historical trajectories of people of color, American Indians, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities. Likewise, several groups suggested that the educational system is biased toward history of the dominant (white) culture.
- Lack of curricular focus on cultural and historical information was described as a root cause of harmful narratives and beliefs in mainstream U.S., including lack of knowledge of groups other than white people and people without disabilities.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Community-cultural learning centers and community-specific organizations have curricula and activities that celebrate learning the histories of the communities they serve.
- Ethnic studies departments in universities and colleges have research, curricula, and programs designed to prepare teachers and administrators to understand and respect their diverse students (e.g. State of Montana's policy).
- Role models and leaders in Minnesota have the potential to contribute to developing and delivering information to the education system.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- American Indian history and slavery are part of the foundation of the United States. U.S. history currently devalues American Indians and their history of colonization and genocide at the founding moments of the U.S. It will be important to engage Tribal representatives and the American Indian community in repairing this historical representation. Likewise, U.S. history also minimizes and devalues the long-term impact of slavery on African-American people and U.S. institutions, social narratives, and more.
- Specific communities need accurate and representative historical education that includes pre-U.S. experiences.
- The U.S. government program called Countering Violent Extremism is currently funded in schools. Participants in the process suggested that this program tracks, terrorizes, and targets young women wearing hijabs.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Identify already existing K-12 curricula that accurately reflect multiple histories and community experiences. Use these models as the basis for Minnesota curricula.**





## 11. Build a Better Post-Secondary Pipeline

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Build a pipeline specifically designed to prepare and support post-secondary educational attainment for young women who experience the greatest disparities.*

The research engagement process identified education as one of the strongest themes. Many participants have high educational aspirations and described education at all levels, including post-secondary, as a cornerstone to future success for young women. Our participants said that they see post-secondary education as deeply intertwined with personal well-being, power, leadership, and financial stability for young women and their communities. But, they identified significant gaps in the post-secondary access pipeline their communities experience, including early educational tracking, disciplinary procedures, more and earlier support needed for first-generation college goers, financial barriers, campus climates that aren't supportive, and more. They believed that a more culturally and community responsive pipeline specifically designed for young women should be built.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive when they have access to post-secondary education through a young women-centered pipeline that starts early to focus on course selection and content, educational goal-setting, scholarships, mentorships, balancing school and family, role models, and enriching and supportive campus climates.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- K-12 does not adequately prepare all young women for post-secondary education (PSE).
  - › Lack of diverse role models, class selections, and guidance counseling.
  - › Need for additional information, especially for first-generation college students.
  - › Lack of funding and high costs for PSE.
  - › Lack of information and awareness about scholarships and financial aid.
- Many young women from all eight communities do not feel welcome or safe in schools.
- Lack of connection and access to educational institutions, networks, and career tracks.
- Entrenched, generational financial instability.
- FAFSA (federal financial aid) only looks at income, not life circumstances, debt, etc.
- Cultural norms and stereotypes about young women.
- Mental health and health challenges.
- Family caregiving responsibilities.
- Reality of student debt without a safety net.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Young women already make up a greater proportion of the college student population than young men. However, more men are employed in the workforce and are in positions of power and leadership than women.
- While there are some community members who do not value post-secondary education as an option for young women, there are more who place honor and value on getting a college degree and a career.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- This recommendation applies to all communities in the YWI MN who experience educational opportunity gaps.
- Not all young women face the same barriers. It will be important to triage and direct young women to the programs, supports, and people they will need to thrive.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Develop and publicize a thorough inventory of current organizations, services, and supports available today in Minnesota that aid young women to complete post-secondary education.**





## 12. Increase Diversity of K-12 Staff (+ Training)

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Increase the diversity of public school staff at all levels to better reflect the K-12 student body in Minnesota. Assure that all staff have appropriate training, resources, and supports to develop greater competency and respect for all students.

The research engagement process identified education as one of the strongest themes. Most participants see education as a cornerstone to future success for young women. Young women believe they do better in school when they see their communities, identities, and cultures represented by school staff at all levels. While positive experiences in schools were mentioned, many young women from diverse communities described school experiences that were harmful. Multiple experiences and examples of misunderstandings and judgement, racism, gender bias, and discrimination were shared. Participants suggested two causes:

- 1 School staff do not reflect Minnesota's diverse communities.
- 2 Training and licensure for school staff does not require and/or value cultural competency.

### OUTCOME:

Young women are thriving when they feel welcome and represented in the K-12 school experience. Representative staff leads to academic success and overall achievements for young women.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Lack of role models in authoritative positions – teachers, administrators, school counselors, and volunteers – that understand young women's culture, history, and varied experiences.
- Young women reported feeling disregarded, judged, silenced, under-valued, and harmed by school staff. This has a negative impact on school success, attendance, self-perception, mental health, and bullying.
- Young women with disabilities face unique barriers due to physical environment, curriculum, and untrained staff and students.
- School staff at all levels of education are not reflective of Minnesota's various communities.
- Lack of support for young women who are English language learners.

- Lack of college prep courses for young women.
- Current school suspension and disciplinary practices that target students of color.
- Undervaluing educators: teachers' salaries and negative social perceptions of the teaching profession were highlighted as barriers to recruiting diverse teachers.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Our geographic communities have become more diverse, and as a result more diverse people may become educators.
- The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has internal departmental data that could help schools improve their school climate.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Young women with disabilities face challenges in school settings, including physical access to the building, tracking in special education, and judgment from staff and peers.
- Participants highlighted a gender and racial intersection in young women with disabilities and minority groups who are more likely to be diagnosed, placed in special education, and undertreated.
- LGBTQ students face specific barriers such as bathrooms, bullying, and invisibility.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Change teacher licensure policies in post-secondary education institutions to require culturally diverse courses, such as community-specific history, LGBTQ culture, and disability experiences.
- Conduct an analysis of current teacher training programs and administrator academies to identify ways to increase participation and value from diverse communities.
- Identify new ways of attracting, recruiting, and maintaining diverse teachers who represent the school body.





ACTION AREA:

# Cultural & Self-Identity

*“We all had different input to our action plan, and I want to encourage all young women to be proud of who they are and to speak up about anything that degrades our humanity.”*

– Young Women’s Cabinet member



## 13. Ensure Community Spaces and Conversations

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Support communities to create their own multigenerational spaces to hold conversation and dialogue about gender, race, place, and other intersecting identities within and across communities.*

The research engagement process identified a great need for more community spaces and conversations, such as the working group process. Young women report that they do not have enough safe and supportive spaces where they can be themselves and strengthen their cultural identities. Knowledge and value of cultural heritage were deemed cornerstones to thriving by the participants.

### OUTCOME:

A young woman who is thriving is part of a strong multigenerational community that supports her cultural and self-identity.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Not enough safe and supportive spaces where young women can be themselves and strengthen their cultural and community identities.
- Some young women feel left behind, misunderstood, or judged by older women in their communities (there are different norms and expectations for the role of women across generations).
- Younger generations of women lack opportunities to learn from their elders, and older generations ignore or miss out on learning from younger women communities.
- The research engagement process identified stigma in Minnesota against spaces (e.g., career, educational, community) that are occupied predominantly by people of color and that this presents a barrier for developing strong cultural and self-identities.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- There are many supportive, interactive program models that currently exist (e.g. Life by Design, Women's Foundation of Minnesota's Economic Opportunity Summit, and others).
- American Indian women in the metro area are already doing well when it comes to bridging generational gaps and maintaining supportive community spaces.
- This recommendation is about building power, not taking power. It can also open spaces for dialogue across communities.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- The growing urban/rural divide also means that funding and logistics of "community spaces" may be more viable in areas with greater population density. We need to figure out how to hold these conversations in Greater Minnesota so they are not left out or left behind.
- The LGBTQ community often creates intentional spaces for itself; consider more intersectional spaces to explore sexual identity, gender identity, race/ethnicity, mental, cognitive, and physical disabilities, immigrant status, etc.
- Some identities and experiences are more stigmatized than others. For example, transgender people may need closed spaces that are safer and are not public.
- Young women in communities such as Greater Minnesota and urban African American communities have expressed a real need for spaces with fun, healthy, and meaningful activities for personal enrichment and to help facilitate leadership, skill-building, and networking.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Engage partners to create listservs, group pages for sharing and networking, and other networking and sharing opportunities throughout the year.**
- **Fund community-based organizations to host multigenerational conversations among girls and women in their communities.**
- **Identify organizations and groups that develop cultural knowledge and practices.**



## 14. Respect and Teach Multiple Languages

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Support community and educational pathways for young women to build and explore connections among language, culture, and positive self-identity in communities of color, American Indian communities, immigrant communities, LGBTQ communities, and disabilities communities.*

The young women in our research engagement process underscored the importance of their communities' home language for positive self-identity. Young women see language abilities as a strength and an advantage. Learning a second language provides many developmental benefits, the ability to communicate across cultures, and positive experiences for English language learners. Hearing young women are increasingly learning American Sign Language to communicate with those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Young women who participated in the research engagement process highlighted the connections between positive self-identity, leadership, and language.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive when they have a positive connection to their culture and community through language learning, increased language access, and removal of language barriers.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Women of color, American Indian young women, and young women in immigrant communities need ways to connect to their cultures and often identify language as a key part in that process.
- Young women who are of "two worlds" with language – one at home and one outside of the home – require additional support to bridge diverging cultures. These young women often must play the role of the interpreter to help their families in medical institutions, governmental processes, and more.

### BUILD ON STRENGTHS:

- Communities place value on knowing one's own native or home language.
- American Indian communities are building language tables and other pathways to restoring native languages that were forcibly destroyed through conquest and boarding schools.
- Language learning helps to build identity and strong positive feelings.

- Learning a second language has many developmental benefits.
- Some schools already teach second languages and American Sign Language as early as pre-K and K-5.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- For immigrant communities, language is critical for individual and cultural identity, and it links youth to older generations.
- Among American Indians, language reclamation is a critical part of fighting the long-term effects of conquest and genocide.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Add additional languages for high school credit (e.g. Ojibwa, Hmong, Somali, and American Sign Language).
- Minnesota students will explore different cultures and build shared understanding with other communities through language and cultural education in both public school (K-12) and community settings.
- Allow fluency in additional languages for post-secondary admission.
- Explore certification of languages in partnership with ethnic studies at universities and colleges.





ACTION AREA:

# Health & Wellness

*“I need a safe space with other girls like me, to come together to practice healthy living. Whether that’s through exercise, health groups, counseling, or mentorship.”*

– Young Women’s Cabinet member



## 15. Increase Access to Women's Health Care

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Promote access to women's health education and services built on cultural and community strengths so that young women know about their bodies and can make appropriate and healthy choices as they grow and age.*

The research engagement process suggests that young women of color, American Indian young women, young women with disabilities, young women in Greater Minnesota, and LGBTQ youth do not have adequate access to female-centered knowledge and appropriate medical care related to menstruation, reproduction, hormones, anatomy, healthy lifestyles (food and exercise), heart health, and more. The research engagement process surfaced stigmas around women's bodies, their health, and their choices, as well as intersecting gender, family, and cultural norms that can limit choices and harm their self-image. Young women have specific needs related to women's health that are often shaped by culture, family, and communities.

### OUTCOME:

Young women are thriving when they have access to appropriate and supportive health care across their lifespan that is tailored to their community.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Lack of access to female-centered and culturally-affirming health care options.
- Gender norms and stigmas around menstruation and women's bodies.
- Barriers to accessing feminine hygiene supplies, birth control, etc. (including financial barriers, lack of clinics, and societal stigmas).
- Lack of clinics statewide that offer women's health care services (e.g., Greater Minnesota, metropolitan areas).
- Health disparities in heart disease, strokes, cancer, and more.
- Restricted access to healthy/fresh food in their communities – address zoning laws and policies.
- Lack of cultural awareness surrounding sexual health trainings or services (i.e., female genital mutilation (FGM), religious practices, community or immigrant-specific cultural norms).
- Not enough reliable and judgement-free services for teen parents.

- Paid parental leave for caregivers, including enough time to deal with postpartum ailments.
- Drug addiction was mentioned in some interviews: both personal addiction and addiction suffered by family members.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- There are examples of successful school-based and community clinics, particularly ones equipped to support women's health.
- Individuals talked about the important role of family and community, multigenerational conversations, and community support.
- Cultural-based celebrations of women's health and development.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Some communities hold beliefs about women's bodies and sexuality that are different from mainstream culture (which itself may not empower young women's health). Young women in these communities must navigate this cultural divide.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) requires special consideration.
- Transgender women have specific healthcare needs around women's health.
- For young women with disabilities, sexuality is typically minimized and autonomy is often taken away due to a perceived lack of ability. As a result, the risk of sexual abuse is heightened.
- Specialty healthcare needs to be designed and accessible for young women with disabilities.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Create a plan to publicize existing clinics and resources in Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities to the young women who need access to their services.**
- **Create and initiate a culturally and gender affirmative curriculum to support conversations about sex for health education teachers. This curriculum should include women with disabilities.**
- **Promote open conversations about sexual health in high schools and create a conversation campaign.**





## 16. Increase Mental Health Support

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Increase access to culturally-specific mental health services and supports for young women in Minnesota.*

The research engagement process suggested that mental health issues can cause significant barriers to thriving and that they are linked to other barriers and harmful experiences such as assault, trauma, homelessness, and violence. Mental health and well-being go beyond learning to love and take care of oneself. Participants in the process suggested that mental illnesses experienced by young women are not just about depression and anxiety, but also gender dysphoria, eating disorders, personality disorders, and many more. These issues impact young women at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, place, and class. Participants believe that, for many women, mental health needs are unnoticed and addressed because of social stigma. Participants in the research engagement process stated the need for both formal mental health services and informal supports for developing positive mental health and well-being.

### OUTCOME:

Young women are thriving when they are able to access mental health and wellness support.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Stigma of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and other mental illnesses make it difficult to seek help or talk about mental health needs in the education system, the workplace, family and community settings, and even with health care providers.
- High suicide rates among some communities (see Community Considerations).
- Long wait times for young women seeking mental health support, and a lack of mental health care providers specifically for young women.
- Mental health services need to be low-cost/free and accessible. These barriers exist across all our working groups, and even more so in Greater Minnesota.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- There are already clinics in high schools in the metro area – particularly ones equipped to support women’s health – alongside community-based clinics and service providers like Kente Circle, Aruba, and Cultural Providers Network.
- Many young women have dealt with mental health issues their whole lives and have a lot of insight to bring to clinics, student groups, and other organizations that focus on women’s mental health.
- Mental health solidarity between women can be very powerful.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Many young women in Greater Minnesota feel isolated from people with similar identities to their own.
- People of color are often underdiagnosed for mental illness due to distrust among some people of color for institutions and clinicians, and stigmas people of color have faced in health care.
- High rates of violence toward American Indian women impacts mental health.
- Many healthcare providers do not understand LGBTQ identities and concepts, such as chosen names and pronouns. Many healthcare providers lack education around LGBTQ health needs.
- Ableism is prevalent in all of society as well as within the healthcare system.
- “Mental health” may be a concept that is unfamiliar – or even stigmatized – within specific immigrant or refugee populations.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Create dialogues within and between communities to reduce the stigma around mental illness and ensure everyone feels safe to seek the resources and support they need.**
- **Develop a mental health course for all young women starting in middle school that includes basic skills like emotional control and regulation, self-care, coping, interpersonal skills and communication, knowing oneself and one’s interests/values/morals, etc.**



## 17. Prevent Violence through Healthy Relationships

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Educate young women and men about healthy relationships, harmful narratives and norms, and promoting positive self-identities to reduce violence.*

The research engagement process found that young people need more support to understand, construct, and maintain healthy relationships built on respect and positive self-identities. Interviews and working groups highlighted the need to engage boys and men in this work. They also suggested that when young women do not know what a healthy relationship looks like, they are more susceptible to exploitation, bullying, and violence.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive when they set healthy boundaries in relationships with peers, partners, and others.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Young women with cognitive disabilities experience disproportional abuse and exploitation.
- Many young women do not regularly see healthy relationships modeled or celebrated in all areas of their lives, including schools, communities, faith institutions, family, youth groups, nonprofit programs, and the media.

### BUILD ON STRENGTHS:

- Strong role models and leaders are already supporting young women and young men to develop skills and knowledge about healthy relationships built on mutual respect.
- Advocates are working against sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, and have begun implementing this kind of programming in a variety of settings.
- There is already space provided in school curricula for health classes, even though participants suggested that those classes do not yet do enough.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cultural shifts must occur with respect and cultural competency, particularly among community leaders.
- Some communities, including within dominant society, have cultural norms and expectations that do not support relationships built on mutual benefit.

- Acknowledge sexuality of young women with disabilities, and include them in knowledge and skill-building opportunities for healthy relationships.
- LGBTQ youth need help navigating healthy relationships in the context of same sex and non-binary gender couples.
- Transgender women face high rates of violence and sexual violence, particularly trans women of color.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Implement evidence-based, culturally competent curricula on healthy relationships in health classes beginning in middle school.
- Support nonprofit organizations working with young men to provide education and skill-building about healthy relationships.
- Support nonprofit organizations working with young women to provide education and skill-building about healthy relationships.



ACTION AREA:

# Family & Caregiving

*“My mom works late, so I have to stay at school late. Since there’s no after-school bus, I wait until the janitors kick me out.”*

– Young Women’s Cabinet member



## 18. Increase Access to Childcare

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Increase access to childcare and early education opportunities that are accessible (day, time, location), affordable, high quality, and culturally appropriate for young women and their families.*

The research engagement process highlighted the need for affordable and quality childcare that provides early education opportunities. To prioritize quality childcare, there must be funding for accessible childcare and for competitive pay for those working in childcare. When quality childcare is available, young women who are parents or caregivers of siblings can succeed in their educational, career, and self-development goals. Widespread availability of affordable, quality childcare and early education will help reduce barriers compounded by time and allow young women and their children to reach their full potential.

### OUTCOME:

A thriving young woman can balance family responsibilities while pursuing her own dreams by having access to childcare for her siblings and her own children.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Some young women are caregivers. Without enough support, caring for young children can greatly impede their education and career success. Obligations to provide childcare for siblings can cause a great deal of stress and feelings of being overwhelmed, especially when balancing with school work, extracurricular activities, and a social life.
- Social norms and expectations can place young women in roles to care for children ahead of pursuing their own hopes and dreams.
- For families living in poverty, childcare responsibilities are critical for the family to survive.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Access to high quality childcare has been a mainstay in movements for the rights of women and people with low wealth.
- Young women value their roles and responsibilities in their families, but also want the freedom and ability to pursue educational and work opportunities.
- Parenthood is a source of strength for many young women.

- Mothers, aunts, and grandmothers are role models and pillars of their communities.
- With multiple roles, young women take on numerous leadership positions in programs, organizations, or workplaces.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Many immigrant and refugee families prioritize family responsibilities and roles of young women and girls in childcare. Subsidizing childcare can support already existing cultural models by paying the young women and girls for the labor that they would normally do uncompensated.
- Many childcare providers are unequipped to care for a child who is LGBTQ or do not have a safe environment for an LGBTQ child to express themselves.
- Childcare providers need specialized training to properly care for children with disabilities and special needs.
- Childcare can be difficult to find in Greater Minnesota.
- Ensure consideration for parents with disabilities and for parents of children with disabilities.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Increase support and funding for community-centered childcare to increase more affordable and/or subsidized quality childcare options.**
- **Increase the availability of childcare options in schools, work, and colleges so caregivers can continue with their education and careers while caring for those who depend on them.**
- **Increase outreach to families about the availability of childcare options (through partnerships with schools, community organizations, recreation centers).**



## 19. Change Gender and Generational Roles

■ **RECOMMENDATION:** *Ensure social norms are expanded beyond traditional gender roles.*

The research engagement process strongly identified that young women value their roles and responsibilities within their families. Women caregivers are strong role models and pillars of their communities. However, family responsibilities can make it harder for young women to pursue educational goals, develop a successful career, and maintain social connections. Young women and their communities discussed the double-bind where young women are expected to help at home, succeed at school, and care for boys and men in the family. However, boys and men are not held to the same standard. Our participants surfaced two trends:

- 1 Workplace discrimination and lack of access to living-wage jobs among parents makes it harder for heads of household to provide for their families. Young women in the family are often needed and expected to fill the gap.
- 2 Family structures can limit options for young women outside of their immediate family.

### OUTCOME:

Young women thrive when not limited by gender stereotypes and harmful gender expectations while leading positive changes in their own lives and serving as role models for the next generation.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Women are considered the primary caregivers and responsible for holding their families together. In many communities, young women are expected to be devoted caregivers, seeking respect from their elders, partners, and children. These traditional roles and norms are part of patriarchal family structures that can prevent young women from working outside the home; experiencing growth and satisfaction outside the home; and becoming financially independent. Many religious communities hold the belief that women should be subservient to men.
- For many families, including immigrant families, pregnancy outside of marriage is considered shameful and some parents force their children to get married. Single parenting amid these gender norms presents challenges.

- Delete this bullet point. It doesn't seem to make sense in this section.
- Immigrant women's legal status is often dependent on a partner's status. Their rights are a function of the migration and residency status of their partner.
- Lack of messaging supporting positive self-identity for young women.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Young women are proud of their contributions to their families.
- Caregiving can be a source of strength for many young women.
- Elder women are role models and pillars of their communities.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- The degree of gender norm rigidity varies within and between communities. All communities are impacted by potentially limiting gender roles and norms. Likewise, all communities and families have gender role strengths.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Promote the values of gender equity and educate men, young men, and boys so that there is greater acceptance of household responsibility across genders.
- Ensure cross-cultural and culturally respectful training for communities where more rigid gender norms may be more common.
- Promote examples of young women in a variety of educational and career fields. For example, educate marketing companies and marketing departments of corporations about the benefits of portraying women in less "traditional" or stereotyped roles in their advertising.



## 20. Facilitate Holistic Mentorship

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Support community-based, multigenerational mentoring and life coaching for young women.*

The research engagement process identified mentoring and role models as an important part of thriving. Specifically, participants sought holistic mentoring throughout childhood, teenage, and young adult years. Holistic mentorship involves all areas of life – family, education, community, cultural and self-identity, mental and physical health. Having supportive figures and healthy role models that support young women in all these areas is vital. Additionally, mentors and role models should reflect and represent the young women they are supporting. Participants also suggested that successful women become mentors to the younger generations, as a method of paying it forward.

### OUTCOME:

A young woman is thriving when she has individuals helping her and she is able to teach and learn from others.

### ADDRESSES BARRIERS:

- Students struggle with knowing the ins and outs of a post-secondary institution, especially for those who are first-generation college students or face language barriers in application and scholarship processes.
- Lack of role models to relate to who have similar backgrounds or experiences.
- Hurtful, restrictive, or biased representations of women and their abilities.
- Unequal representation of women in various education and career fields.

### BUILDS ON STRENGTHS:

- Increased emphasis on memoir writing and learning from others' experiences.
- Build on existing support for women entrepreneurs and businesses that hire women equitably, as evidenced by workplace and role diversity.
- There are many successful women who could be recognized and whose accomplishments could be better supported.

### COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- American Indian women in the Twin Cities have successfully established mentors within their community.
- Young women in Greater Minnesota have fewer opportunities to be enrolled in formal mentorship programs and it can be harder to find connections within a smaller population.
- Creating and maintaining tiered mentoring programs throughout childhood, teenage, and young adult years was frequently acknowledged as an indicator for success.
- Holistic mentorship provided by older women and peers can support all the other recommendations to help young women thrive by providing hands-on skills, coaching, navigation, care, and support.
- Most people said they were not looking for a "traditional" mentorship program. Rather, they seek intentional and supportive connections and modes for passing along valuable information and skills through relationships rather than programs.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Ensure that young women receive guidance from mentors representing a wide range of educational paths, leadership roles, and professional positions.**
- **Support and enable women mentorship/role model activities in all sectors and in all areas of life – at home, at school, and in their communities.**
- **Mentors and role models should reflect and represent the young women they are supporting.**
- **Increased funding and opportunities for one-on-one coaching and mentorship.**



SECTION III:

# Next Steps

# Next Steps:

The Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota (YWI MN) *Blueprint for Action* is the first key step in the Initiative. The Women's Foundation of Minnesota and the Governor's Office of the State of Minnesota, with young women and cross-sector partners from across the state, will drive the work and implement the plan sequentially and strategically through 2023.

## 1 COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS:

The Women's Foundation of Minnesota will resource and drive the YWI MN *Blueprint* recommendations in two ways. Through a new pilot, microgrant fund, the Foundation will harness the leadership of young women with direct, one-time, \$2,500 grants to fund their *Blueprint* ideas for action, including mentorship opportunities and leadership convenings. The Foundation will also provide grants up to \$30,000 to organizations whose projects tie to and move specific recommendations in the *Blueprint* forward, and who work on behalf of and in partnership with young women. Through 2023, the Foundation will invest \$9 million in research, grantmaking, policy, field-building, and strategic communications to drive implementation of the *Blueprint* recommendations.

## 2 ASSET MAPPING:

Through a statewide community mapping process, the YWI MN will identify existing assets and resources within communities already focused on creating equity in outcomes for young women. The map will be used to link community resources and build community strengths, identify gaps, forge and deepen cross-sector partnerships, and inform and drive the YWI MN with young women and communities across Minnesota.

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION DESIGN:

The Women's Foundation of Minnesota and Governor's Office of the State of Minnesota will work with the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota Council (see p. 52) to create the plan to implement the recommendations across sectors. Data will continue to drive this process. Three members of the Young Women's Cabinet will sit as equal leaders and partners with the Council to implement the *Blueprint* recommendations. McKinsey & Company is a pro-bono partner developing an engagement and tactical plan for the Council to move the *Blueprint* forward.

## 4 PROSPERITY & WELL-BEING INDEX:

The Women's Foundation of Minnesota will develop an index to measure progress toward a Minnesota where barriers to young women's success are removed and all young women can succeed. The Index will be online and interactive to ensure access for all, engage and mobilize the public and policymakers, and drive the work of the YWI MN through 2023.



A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of dashed white lines on a red-to-orange gradient background. In the upper left, a small dashed circle contains two arrows pointing towards its center. In the middle right, a larger solid white circle is centered on a vertical dashed line.

## SECTION IV:

# Examples of Systems Change

Systems change takes time. It demands immediate urgency, long-term commitment, and a tested vision that can bring people together, unite ideas, disrupt norms, and establish new paths to prosperity. The Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota encompasses all of the above and so much more. The following examples represent successful stories of real systems change.

## EXAMPLES OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

# MN Girls Are Not For Sale

### Summary:

MN Girls Are Not For Sale is an eight-year campaign of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota to galvanize resources to end sex trafficking in Minnesota. The success of the MN Girls campaign and critical impact it has had on the work to end sex trafficking is undeniable. With cross-sector leaders, the Women's Foundation has invested \$7.5 million and driven a sea change in our communities' response to this unconscionable crime.

### Timeline:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	FUTURE				
<p><b>2010</b> – Women’s Foundation of Minnesota convenes more than 100 leaders from all over Minnesota to create a strategic, multi-sector plan to combat child sex trafficking.</p>	<p><b>2011, November</b> – The Women’s Foundation launches MN Girls Are Not For Sale campaign to galvanize resources to end sex trafficking in Minnesota.</p>	<p><b>2011, July</b> – Passage of <i>Safe Harbor</i> changes state laws to ensure that children under 18 years of age who are sold for sex are no longer criminalized, but treated as victims of a crime in need of safe housing and specialized services.</p>	<p><b>2013</b> – Between 2010 and 2013, the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office, a MN Girls grantee-partner, reports that charges and convictions against sex traffickers in Minnesota increased by 76 percent — from 17 in 2010 to 72 in 2013.</p>	<p><b>2014, August</b> – Creation and implementation of <i>Safe Harbor</i> legislation and the <i>No Wrong Door</i> model results in the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Increased housing and trauma-informed care for victims, from two beds in 2011 to 48 beds as of May 2017.</li><li>» Established a statewide director of child sex trafficking prevention at the MN Dept. of Health; eight regional navigator positions to connect trafficked children with the shelter, support, and services they need; and a training fund for law enforcement and prosecutors.</li><li>» Issued state grants to select nonprofits for housing and trauma-informed care for child sex-trafficking victims across Minnesota.</li></ul>	<p><b>2014, September</b> – <i>Mapping the Market for Sex with Trafficked Minor Girls in Minneapolis: Structures, Functions, and Patterns</i> is published – a first-of-its-kind research and approach to understanding how the overall market for juvenile sex trafficking manifests within communities in one city, Minneapolis.</p>	<p><b>2015, May</b> – The <i>Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act</i> passes, modeled in part on Minnesota’s <i>Safe Harbor</i>.</p>	<p><b>2016, May</b> – <i>Safe Harbor</i> eligibility increases from age 18 to 24.</p>	<p><b>2016, May</b> – The Foundation passes an additional \$2.5 million to support police investigations and a policy provision to increase penalties for perpetrators apprehended during the course of undercover operations is now included in the <i>Safe Harbor</i> law.</p>	<p><b>2016</b> – MN Girls Campaign enters its second phase. The Women’s Foundation’s Board of Trustees extends MN Girls to a second three-year phase based on stakeholder input and calls from the community for the Foundation’s continued leadership.</p>	<p><b>2017</b> – Since 2013, the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office (MN Girls grantee-partner) has trained more than 2,000 law enforcement officers on protocols it developed with statewide partners about child sex trafficking and how to proceed in a victim-centered approach.</p>	<p><b>2017, August</b> – <i>Mapping the Demand: Sex Buyers in Minnesota</i>, new research commissioned and funded by the Foundation, is published. The report examines the demographics of Minnesota’s sex buyers, their buying tendencies, and methods of entry into the marketplace. <i>Mapping the Demand</i> will be used to influence policy, policing, and service provision. The research will be instrumental in allowing communities to create action plans that understand the market, create points of prevention and protection for youth vulnerable to sex trafficking, and end the demand.</p>	<p><b>The Future</b> – The focus of the second phase of MN Girls Are Not For Sale is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» End the demand for sex trafficking</li><li>» Create prevention strategies to reduce vulnerability to sex trafficking</li><li>» Increase visibility, outreach, and services to targeted, underserved communities</li><li>» Build systems and infrastructure to sustain movement to end sex trafficking</li></ul> <p>The campaign continues through March 31, 2019.</p>

## EXAMPLES OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

# Curb-Cut Effects

### Summary:

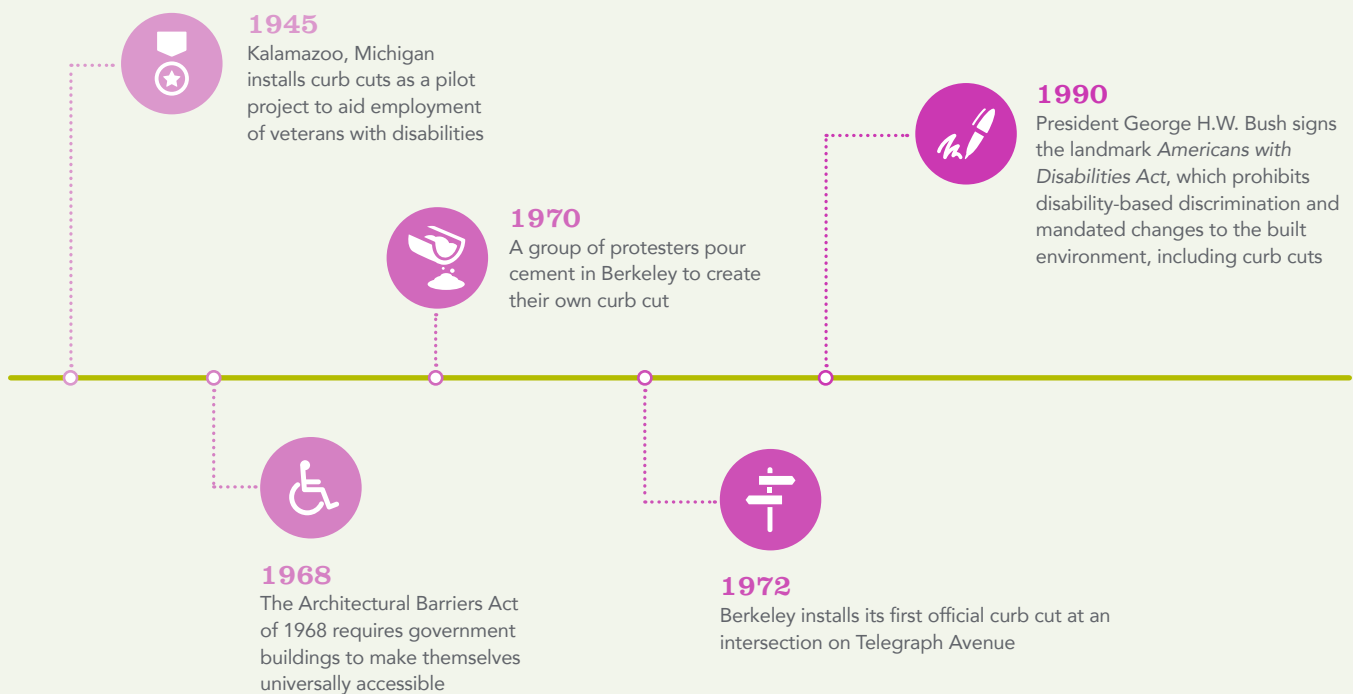
Simply put, a curb cut is the sloping portion of a sidewalk which provides an easy access ramp from the street to the sidewalk for people with disabilities. In the early 1970s, a movement was set in motion to push for this kind of access that seems so common today. Angela Glover Blackwell coined the term *Curb-Cut Effect* to identify laws and programs designed to benefit vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities or people of color, which often end up benefiting all of society.

### Who Benefits:

- People in Wheelchairs
- Parents Pushing Strollers
- Workers Moving Heavy Carts
- Travelers Wheeling Luggage
- Runners
- Skateboarders
- And More \*

\* A study of pedestrian behavior at a Sarasota, Fla., shopping mall revealed that nine out of 10 "unencumbered pedestrians" go out of their way to use a curb cut.

### Timeline:



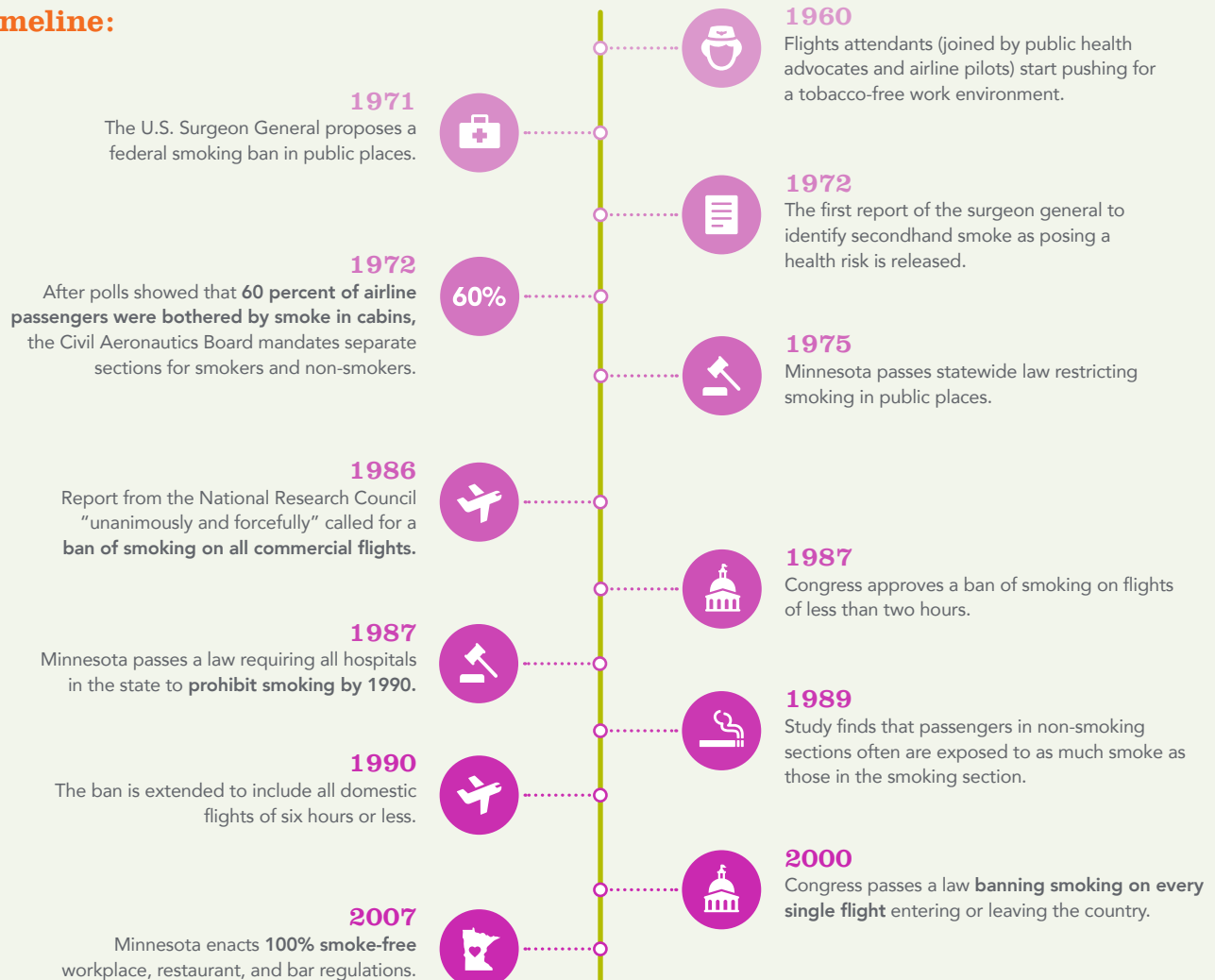
## EXAMPLES OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

# Smoking Ban

## Summary:

Pressure from a flight attendants' union to ban smoking on planes sparked a 50-year national movement that inspired public health campaigns, put an end to smoking in public spaces, and cut tobacco consumption in half.

## Timeline:





SECTION V:

# Acknowledgements

## Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota Council:

*Strong, cross-sector partnerships are the foundation of the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota. We thank the following Governor-appointed community partners for serving on the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota Council.*



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Group; Founder, People of Color Career Fair

## Lead Investors:

*The Women's Foundation of Minnesota is actively raising \$9 million to successfully complete the seven-year YWI MN campaign. We thank our generous, visionary Lead Investors for their partnership and generous commitment of gifts from \$25,000 to \$2 million to create a Minnesota where every girl has the opportunity to thrive and is the champion of her own life.*

*In the first year, we received the following gifts:*



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