



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# dear friends

**Essential.** The word is everywhere, referencing the working people on the front lines of COVID. Those who care for our sick, our elderly, and our children. Those who prepare and serve our food. Who stand behind plexiglass partitions to sell us the groceries and supplies we need, or who deliver the products we've ordered online. One in three jobs held by women has been deemed 'essential' during COVID-19, and Black and brown women are shouldering an even larger burden. Forty percent of essential workers are people of color, and one in six are immigrants.

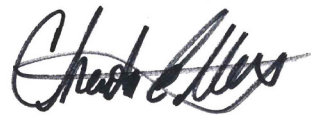
This pandemic has opened the eyes of many to just how essential these jobs, and the people who work in them, are to society's ability to function. And yet, we don't treat them as essential. The women who work in these jobs are chronically underpaid and undervalued. Dr. King said that there is dignity in all labor. He tied dignity to the ability to live, educate your children, buy a home, and provide for your basic necessities.

Women Employed has always fought for dignity, respect, better working

conditions, and opportunity for the people now deemed essential, and not just because those things are nice to have. But because we understand it is the path to agency, safety, and stronger families and communities.

In this report, you'll read about some ways we are working to make systemic changes that ensure that women and their families have the resources to not only weather this unprecedented storm, but also emerge in a system that meets their needs and is better, stronger, and more just.

We won't stop our work until every working woman has real access to the economic security she needs to live, be well, and advance as she desires. Thank you for fighting alongside us.



Cherita Ellens, President & CEO



## board officers





## People, policies, and power.

Those words speak to Women Employed's priorities, and our strength. Uplifting people to ensure they can flourish is at the heart of our work. Changing policy to drive systemic change is a key strategy for lasting progress. We believe every person should embody their power, and when we join together, we are even stronger.

This year, I am proud to have been elected as Women Employed's new Board Chair, along with a fantastic slate of new officers and several new members who bring a revitalizing mix of talents, skills, and perspectives.

Women Employed's commitment to uplifting women and their families is close to my heart. All my life, I've been committed to helping girls and women rise up and embody their power. It's why I became a Girl Scout at an early age, and then became the youngest member of their Board of Directors. It's why I went into law. It's why I was drawn to Women Employed.

Essential workers are also close to my heart. Growing up, my dad worked for the postal service and my mom was a teacher. My neighbors on the South Side of Chicago worked primarily in jobs we'd call essential today. I know those risking their lives to bring home a paycheck aren't just essential in the workplace. They're essential to their families and communities.

YOU are also essential. Your commitment, your advocacy, and your support make the work you'll read about in this report possible. YOU are powerful, and we appreciate you. THANK YOU for making us stronger.



Lynn Watkins-Asiyanbi, Board Chair



*left to right:*

**Lynn Watkins-Asiyanbi**, Chair, Deputy General Counsel, JBT Corporation

**Ambar Mentor-Truppa**, Co-Chair, Vice President of Communications, Shriver Center on Poverty Law

**Nakita Burrell**, Treasurer, Director of Finance and Administration, The McCormick Foundation

**Marjorie Loeb**, Secretary, Partner, Mayer Brown LLP

# Advancing Gender Equity in the Workplace

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The wage and opportunity gaps that continue to plague women and people of color in the workplace lead to massive wealth gaps, leaving many with fewer resources to weather the impact of a crisis—and nothing has made that more clear than COVID-19. While this virus supposedly doesn't discriminate, our social structure does, which means women of color are disproportionately impacted by these gaps.

i'm  
*essential*



According to a recent study by Boston University, salary history bans, like the one WE fought for in Illinois, lead to an...



**8% pay  
increase**  
for women changing jobs



**13% pay  
increase**  
for Black workers changing jobs

### Legislation That Works

Last year, we won a major victory for pay equity when we passed the Illinois No Salary History Law, protecting millions from having to disclose their current or past salary when applying for new jobs. **This year, to ensure people know about their new rights, we developed a No Salary History and Pay Equity toolkit.** We got the word out to more than 800,000 people across Illinois by delivering workshops, leveraging social media, and working with employer groups, legislators, and community partners to reach their communities. **Laws like this are essential to closing the gender and racial wage gap.**

### Working in Coalition to Advance Equity

We are fighting just as hard for workplace equity today as we have since 1973, and one of the best ways to advance change is through coordinated, collective effort. **We joined forces with partners and coalitions locally, across Illinois, and nationally,** including We Demand More, the BE HEARD coalition, Survivor's Agenda, Women's March Chicago, TIME'S UP, The United State of Women (USOW), and many others. **to raise awareness, build momentum, and advance equity for all.**

As a founding member of the Equal Pay Day Chicago coalition, we are driving forward the national conversation on equal pay to center the experiences of women of color by moving Chicago's equal pay event from March, which marks equal pay day for the 'average' woman, to October to coincide with Latina Equal Pay Day, the last equal pay day recognized in 2020.



*left to right:*  
Cherita Ellens  
and Tina Tchen

**“When I think about the power of coalition building, I think about organizations like Women Employed. WE has a solid track record of fighting for equity, and is a trusted partner to TIME’S UP in our fight for a future where no one is harassed, assaulted, or discriminated against at work.”**

**TINA TCHEEN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, TIME’S UP**

# Improving Job Quality for All Workers

i'm  
essential



We all deserve fair wages and safe and dignified workplaces. Too many of the workers we've deemed essential during COVID-19—grocery workers and cleaning staff, delivery drivers and health care aides, child care workers and fast-food cooks—go to work on the front lines for \$10.00 an hour in Illinois. Many lack access to paid sick time, and often their work schedules are so unstable it's hard to budget, plan for child care, go to school, or take a second job. It's a matter of dignity, but also of equity—most of these workers are women, and a vastly disproportionate number are people of color.

## Raising the Minimum Wage

In 2019, WE helped to rally support to raise the Illinois minimum wage from \$8.25/hour to \$15/hour by 2025. The first increase went into effect on July 1st. This year, we advocated to accelerate Chicago's minimum wage increase to \$15/hour by 2021, and, with your help, we won! The ordinance also gradually eliminates the subminimum wage for youth workers and workers with disabilities.

# 400,000

## WORKING PEOPLE



will get a raise thanks to the  
Chicago minimum wage increase!

## Ensuring a Fair Workweek

All working people deserve the security of stable and predictable work schedules. In 2020 the **Chicago Fair Workweek Ordinance**—requiring most employers to provide two weeks advance notice of schedules, ten hours of rest between shifts, compensation for last-minute schedule changes, and an offer of extra hours to part-time employees before hiring additional help—went into effect. **WE worked alongside partners to win this new law and have worked with the Chicago Office of Labor Standards (OLS) to educate workers on their new protections** as well as how to file a complaint if those rights are violated.

## Leading the Charge for Paid Leave

We all need paid time off when we or our loved ones get sick. Across Illinois, there are still over 1.5 million working people who don't have access to a single paid sick day. No one should have to choose between their health, their family, and their paycheck. **This year, as head of the Illinois Paid Sick Days Coalition**, and with the support of our national partner Family Values @ Work, we've positioned our state for forward movement in 2021 by **recruiting 37 cosponsors for our paid sick days bill**, delivering a state-wide petition with more than 2,000 signatures, and keeping the pressure on in Springfield to make this bill a priority.

At the federal level, **WE joined our voice with national partners to advocate for—and win!—emergency paid sick time and paid family leave** for struggling families. WE also developed and delivered a comprehensive set of Congressional asks for COVID relief, and compiled an iterative list of resources to help working people, families, and adult students access programs and support to get through the crisis.

“After my C-Section, I went back to work in two weeks. It felt like the only choice I had was to go back to work... If I would have stayed on maternity leave for much longer, I probably would have been in debt.”

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**VALENCIA GARRETT,**  
**CUSTOMER SERVICE EMPLOYEE**, on the importance of paid leave. Watch her story at [womenemployed.org/annualreport](https://womenemployed.org/annualreport)





# Making College Affordable, Accessible, and Equitable

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Each year, millions of people pursue a college degree or credential seeking economic security and a better life. However, many are deemed underprepared for college-level coursework and placed into developmental, or remedial, education and too often get stuck. Black, brown, and low-income students are disproportionately placed in these courses. That, along with high tuition costs and other factors, leads to damaging racial achievement gaps in higher education.

## Improving Developmental Education

Last year, WE and the Partnership for College Completion (PCC) won a state resolution to create an Illinois Developmental Education Task Force to address the problems with our state's post-secondary remedial education system. This year, WE, PCC, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) convened that task force to identify solutions, developing a set of recommendations to move our state forward. WE also worked with ICCB on its Workforce Education Strategic Plan, which includes improvements to developmental education.

The Illinois Developmental Education Task Force recommended **21 concrete actions to improve developmental education** with benchmarks and a timeline to complete them.





“At the Illinois Community College Board, we value partners like Women Employed who share in our focus on equitable access, opportunity, and outcomes for all students. By collaborating together on joint efforts, like the statewide redesign of developmental education, we can fulfill our commitment to ensure that adults are successful in community colleges and that they can advance their careers no matter their skill level.”

**BRIAN DURHAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD**

### Advancing Racial Equity in Higher Education

WE developed a set of recommendations on racial equity in higher education, laying out strategies to ensure students of color are entering inclusive educational environments where they are supported in critical and transformational ways. And to align strategy and advocacy around higher education policy, we continued to convene key stakeholders as the Illinois

Higher Education Network (IHEN)—a powerful collaboration of policy and advocacy experts, and student support and mentoring organizations.

### Equipping Students to Raise Their Voices

It's critical that students are empowered to raise their own voices. WE worked with Young Invincibles to adapt our in-person student advocacy workshops for Google Classroom. Now

students all over Illinois can learn more about how to be changemakers in their communities and develop essential leadership skills. Thanks to our efforts, students are learning how to bring their perspectives to their legislators to impact decisions about financial aid and other resources that affect them directly.



i'm  
essential



# Strengthening Career Pathways to Family-Sustaining Wages

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By 2025, 67 percent of U.S. jobs will require a college degree or certificate. It will become more necessary for women—who are the sole or primary breadwinners in nearly 41 percent of American families—to hold college credentials in order to support their families.

To ensure everyone can obtain skills necessary to secure jobs providing family-sustaining wages, WE champions two types of career pathways programs. Bridge programs are specialized courses that help students build the basic reading, language, and math skills they need to earn a GED, while also preparing them for their chosen career. Career Foundations is a career exploration and goal-setting tool. It's a short course that explores career options and creates a personalized plan and path forward.



By partnering with City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) and the community-based organizations in our Career Foundations Consortium to create curricula and deliver these programs, adult students receive support to transition into higher education and further job training.

“Education makes a huge difference. I believe in empowering students to the very core of their lives by helping them explore careers, explore their own skills and abilities, and help them start setting up goals for the future. Women Employed does just that.”



**FERNANDO VILLEDA FLAMENCO, TRANSITION SPECIALIST AT CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO.**

Watch his story at [womenemployed.org/annualreport](https://womenemployed.org/annualreport)

### Connecting Students to Credentials

This year, **WE improved on our existing bridge programs** by working with CCC and community partners to ensure that, while students complete their bridge program, they are simultaneously earning an industry-recognized credential, leading to immediate attachment to the workforce, with the ability to earn advanced certifications over time.

### Supporting the Career Foundations Consortium

When education providers had to rapidly change the way they engage students and clients because of COVID-19 and the stay-at-home orders that followed, our leadership with community-based organizations in the Career Foundations Consortium was crucial. Previously, students had to complete Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) before taking placement testing at CCC. To reduce the burden and improve accessibility, **WE worked with Career Foundations and Healthcare Bridge partners to transition**

**students using current test scores at the ground-level to register for adult education classes at CCC.**

WE also shifted our delivery strategy for Career Foundations, developing distance learning packets of assignments for students who lacked adequate digital access, ensuring that they could continue their learning during and beyond COVID with as few disruptions as possible. WE continues to provide support to members of the Career Foundations Consortium by supporting them in planning for what comes next.

**Nearly 2,500 students**

have completed one of our career pathways programs, taking the step to a better career.



### Thank you to our Career Foundations Consortium members.

- Albany Park Community Center
- Centro Romero
- Central States SER
- Cook County Health
- Erie Neighborhood House
- Heartland Human Care Services
- Howard Area Community Center
- Innovations High School
- National Able Network
- North Lawndale Employment Network
- YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

# thank you

We salute all the corporations, foundations, organizations, and individuals who made a gift between July 1, 2019—June 30, 2020. Due to space constraints, regretfully we cannot list the many people who donated less than \$240. Heartfelt thanks to our donors and partners for fueling this year's essential impact!

## ORGANIZATIONS

### \$100,000+

The Chicago Community Trust  
JPMorgan Chase Foundation

### \$25,000-\$99,999

Alphawood Foundation  
Chicago Foundation for Women  
The Crown Family  
Family Values @ Work  
Joyce Foundation  
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AB Bernstein Wealth Management  
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### \$1,000-\$4,999

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### \$250-\$999

Center for High Performance\*  
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### Champions for Change \$5,000-\$9,999

Virginia Bartholomay  
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Jenny Mannis Wishcamper and Henry Wishcamper

### Partners for Change \$2,500-\$4,999

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Lynn Watkins-Asiyanbi<sup>o</sup>



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Barbara Wilson

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**In Honor of Lydia Bueschel**  
Kerri McClimen  
**In Honor of Cherita Ellens**  
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Merle and Michael Cahan\*  
Lynne and Ricky Weber\*  
**In Honor of Anne Ladky**  
Pamela Baker  
**In Honor of Sharmili Majmudar**  
Catharsis Productions  
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Jesse Reeves  
**In Honor of Meghan Shehorn**  
Kristen Seeger  
Heather Treaday and  
Jamie Cleghorn  
**In Honor of Women Employed Staff**  
Lydia Bueschel and  
Chris Frumkin  
Judy and Ernie Miyashita  
Sylvia Sokolowski

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**In Memory of Suzy Bangs**  
Janet Schumacher  
**In Memory of Arlene O. Battisfore**  
John and Cheryl Battisfore  
Lisa Battisfore  
Rebecca Battisfore  
**In Memory of Peggy Hillman**  
Herbert Kirst  
**In Memory of Mary Schulte**  
Elizabeth Kenefick  
**In Memory of Michael Trister**  
Nancy Duff Campbell\*  
**In Memory of**  
**Sara Western Garagha**  
Lisa Howard



# Building a legacy of impact

When Joan Perkins attended her first meeting at Women Employed in the 1980s, she realized she had been living in a “very insulated world.” It was eye-opening to learn that all women did not have benefits through their employment; that the U.S. was not as advanced as many other nations when it came to rights in the workplace, especially for women.

Joan’s involvement with WE gave her a place to “work on issues that were bigger than myself,” and that satisfaction inspired her to join the Board of Directors and eventually become the Chair. It was during her tenure as Chair in 1989 that Women Employed helped win a record \$14 million settlement in a sexual and racial discrimination suit against a major bank. Joan remembers the celebration after the 13-year legal struggle. “It was a special day! It got settled... AN ENDING HAPPENED!”

Joan’s satisfaction from “doing something larger than herself” is reflected in her decision to name Women Employed as a beneficiary in her IRA. It’s important to her that her legacy extends beyond her family, as a message for future generations of women that “they are not alone.” Through her legacy gift, Joan has ensured that Women Employed will be there to continue to fight for “the needs of the day—whatever they may be.”

**Thank you, Joan.**

## What will your legacy be?

Ensure a future of economic equity and expanded opportunities with your legacy gift to Women Employed. You can make your planned gift through a will or living trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy. When you do, we’ll welcome you as a member of WE’s legacy society, **Generations Circle**.

For more information, email Linda Ballard at [lb Ballard@womenemployed.org](mailto:lb Ballard@womenemployed.org), or call her at 312-782-3902 x 245.

### THANKS TO ALL OUR GENERATIONS CIRCLE MEMBERS

Anonymous\*  
 Kathleen Almaney  
 Nancy D. Anderson\*  
 Shauna Babcock  
 Gabrielle Cummings<sup>‡</sup>  
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 Jerry Esrig<sup>‡</sup>  
 Lisa Turley  
 Lynn Watkins-Asiyanbi<sup>‡</sup>

**INVESTORS FOR CHANGE** / With the generosity of our *Investors for Change*, who make unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more annually, Women Employed is able to pursue the best opportunities to improve workplace conditions and build pathways to higher education so more women can succeed economically.

**ANNE LADKY LEADERSHIP FUND<sup>‡</sup>** / Thank you to these donors who have designated the total or a portion of their gift to the fund created in Anne’s honor. All donations will support initiatives aimed at increasing WE’s impact on the conditions facing women in low-paid occupations and building our movement by engaging next-generation leaders as activists for women’s economic justice.

**NANCY B. KREITER ADVOCACY FUND\*** / Special thanks to the donors of this fund that supports Women Employed’s work to strengthen federal equal opportunity policies.

**PARTNERS IN PROGRESS & BARRIER BREAKERS** / We are so fortunate to have donors who are committed to making lasting change by designating a level of giving each year of at least \$240. Whether through twelve monthly gifts or a one-time gift during the year, our Partners in Progress and Barrier Breakers provide essential funds that support our ongoing work.

**GENERATIONS CIRCLE** / Thanks to our supporters who have included Women Employed in their estate plans, future generations of women will have meaningful opportunities to achieve their aspirations for themselves and their families.

**DEDICATIONS** / Honor a loved one with a gift in their name to Women Employed for a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion. Donations in memory of a special person honor their life and continue their legacy. The tribute gifts noted are donations of \$150 and above.

**For more information about these special giving opportunities, call Linda Ballard at 312-782-3902 x 245 or visit [womenemployed.org](http://womenemployed.org).**



## MONTHLY GIVING / Monthly Donors Spark Change Year-Round

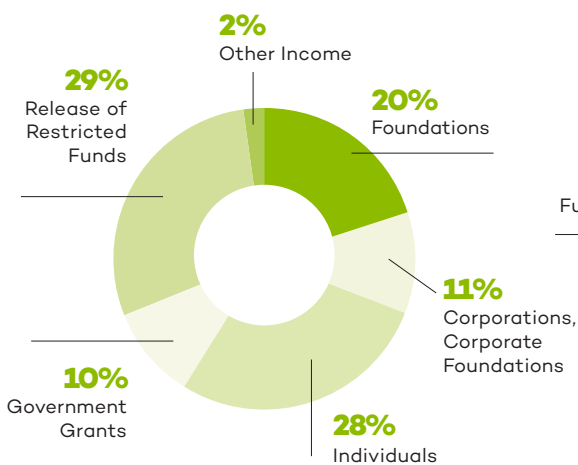
Thanks to all our monthly donors who have made sustaining gifts to Women Employed, ensuring we can take action to advance women's economic status—crafting new strategies and collaborations, speaking out, and mobilizing others.

### Why give monthly?

- It keeps our costs low, so your gift has more impact.
- It's easy! Each month, your credit card is automatically charged, so you drive change without having to think about it.
- You get exclusive updates from us about our latest work and initiatives.
- We send you WE swag, so you can show off your support year-round!

Spark change by becoming a monthly donor today! Visit [womenemployed.org/monthly-giving](https://womenemployed.org/monthly-giving).

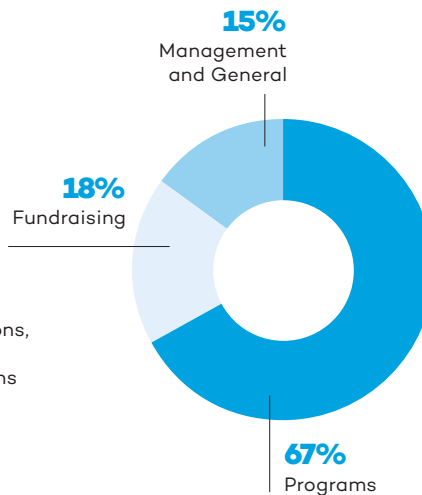
### FINANCIALS



#### INCOME\*

Foundations	441,698
Corporations, Corporate Foundations	248,756
Individuals	632,117
Government Grants	217,496
Release of Restricted Funds	655,054
Other Income	41,528
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,236,649</b>

\*Unrestricted dollars



#### EXPENSES

Programs	1,380,161
Fundraising	308,982
Management and General	383,873
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,073,016</b>

### STAFF

Linda Ballard  
Shirlondra Brooks  
Elizabeth Cunneen  
Mary Kay Devine  
Cherita Ellens  
Corinne Kodama  
Sarah Labadie  
Jessica Lawson  
Jorian Lewke  
Ximena Leyte Escalante  
Sharmili Majmudar  
Judy Miyashita  
Marisol Moreno  
Amanda Sousa  
Christina Warden  
Lauren Wheeler  
Rosa Zapata

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