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WE-Zine



PROGRESS, DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX



We see you! We appreciate you! And Women Employed is proud to be your partner in this work.

Dear %%FirstName%%,

I stand in awe of the community college partners that Women Employed has had the pleasure to partner with over the decades. If you read **last month's WE-Zine**, you know all about the **ASPIRE Project** and the deep work being done by faculty, staff, and administrators from 10 colleges to accelerate the progress of Illinois students to successfully complete college and pursue and careers where they can thrive.

What's often not known is the behind-the-scenes work:

- The students who flood WE with ideas and energy every year through **the Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program** and those who respond to our surveys and requests for interviews and focus groups so that our agenda reflects their needs.
- The faculty and program directors who regularly join WE to find ways to elevate recognition, understanding, and support for Minority Serving Institutions.
- The college Presidents, Deans, and administrators who welcome our expertise at tables where decisions are being made about how money will be distributed equitably, what framework will be used for their campus equity plans, and other systems-changing decisions.
- The agency staff at the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission who provide guidance and leadership, and who welcome students, campuses, and advocates like WE to help craft models of success in higher education that will enhance equity and excellence. And,
- The policymakers who set the framework for equity and success and provide the resources needed to dig in and get the work done.

Undaunted by the hours they put in every week multiplied by months and years (#math) of doing this work, they show up to the partnership table bringing energy, compassion, and commitment.

To you, our partners we say: We see you! We appreciate you! And Women Employed is proud to be your partner in this work.

In Solidarity,

Christina Warden

Christina Warden
Director of Policy and Programs

Five Reasons to Attend *The Working Lunch*

THE WORKING LUNCH
Thursday, May 23, 2024

Panelist
Rev. C.J. Hawking
Executive Director,
Arise Chicago

Panelist
Dr. Cristina
Pacione-Zayas
Chief of Staff,
City of Chicago

Panelist
Audra Wilson
President and CEO,
Shriver Center on
Poverty Law

Moderator
Cherita Ellens
President and
CEO, Women
Employed



womenemployed.org/TWL

In case you missed it, we recently announced the 2024 program for our signature fundraising event, **The Working Lunch**, on May 23rd. We are thrilled to host a dynamic panel of leaders for a thought-provoking conversation focused on the interconnection between the issues facing working women and the collaboration needed to drive change. It will be sure to leave a long-lasting impression. **But that's not the only reason to attend.**

Whether you're a veteran attendee or have never been, here are **five more reasons to get your tickets today** for *The Working Lunch*.

1. Reflect with us on the past year's accomplishments and raise a glass at what's to come!
2. Mix, mingle, and get inspired. With almost 1,000 attendees, it's nearly impossible to leave without making at least one new friend.
3. Hear from women who have benefited from and been impacted by our work.
4. Learn how to get involved with an organization dedicated to building a future of equity for working women, their families, and communities.
5. Celebrate Champion and Emerging Power Builder honorees for using their power to open doors, crash ceilings, and create fundamental and systemic change! (Honorees to be announced soon—stay tuned.)

The Working Lunch

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Networking Reception: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Program and Lunch: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

The Hilton Chicago
720 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL

Reserve Your Tables and Tickets

Go **ALL IN** with Women Employed and experience *The Working Lunch* so that you can see what all the talk is about!

Tables and tickets are limited! Act now and reserve your seats today.

Interested in being a table leader or sponsor? Contact Michelle Schwartz, at mschwartz@womenemployed.org.

Enter The Working Lunch Raffle to Win Big!



Looking for some adventure? Overdue for a self-care day? Or just need to get out and enjoy the city? **The Working Lunch raffle** has it all! And with the warmer, sunnier, and longer days ahead, there's something for everyone.

Enjoy an in-home wine tasting for eight courtesy of PRP Wine International, Inc. Attend a Chicago Fire game with one of your closest friends. Treat yourself to some rest and relaxation with with a 60-minute float and infrared sauna session at FLOAT SIXTY. Or take that much needed vacation with two international, round-trip Southwest Airlines tickets!

With prizes like this, you won't want to miss out! Make this a summer to remember by [purchasing your raffle tickets today](#).

[Purchase Your Raffle Tickets](#)

"They Said": The ASPIRE Project



They Said

ASPIRE assists us in addressing learning gaps through timely remediation, thereby not only saving students time and money but also accelerating their transition to college-level coursework.

Jessica Moreno,
Dean for Academic Support,
Waubonsee Community College



April is National Community College Month, and here at Women Employed, we are proud of the partnerships we have forged with 10 Illinois community colleges through our [Accelerating Student Progress and Increasing Racial Equity \(ASPIRE\) Project](#). The ASPIRE Project aims to: (1) accelerate students' progress through remedial education; (2) increase racial equity and inclusion; (3) provide opportunities for colleges to learn from one another, and (4) use what we collectively learn to inform the field and inform Women Employed's policy agenda.

Since its inception in March of 2021, the ASPIRE Project has not just identified what supports colleges need for advancing improvements in remedial education, but thanks to a multiyear grant from the ECMC Foundation, has been extended to improve developmental education in Illinois by providing resources to develop and test innovative strategies that determine college readiness, place more students directly into credit-bearing courses, and support their academic progress. WE are even launching a Racial Equity Academy this year and will be hosting an ASPIRE Developmental Education Symposium in the Spring of 2025.

In this month's special edition of "She Says," which we are calling, "They Said," we talk with three of our ASPIRE Project partners—[Torria Norman](#), Chair, English, Reading & Communication, [Black Hawk College](#); [Lonetta M. Oliver](#), Dean of Humanities, [Illinois Central College](#); and [Jessica Moreno](#), Dean for Academic Support, [Waubonsee Community College](#)—on how the ASPIRE Project is helping serve their students better, what challenges the ASPIRE Project is helping to address, and the most valuable aspect of their partnership with Women Employed.

[Read More](#)

Women's Economic Power Agenda

For Illinois



womenemployed.org/WEPA

Last November, we joined partner organizations, advocates, and workers for a two-day convening to shape a shared agenda and roadmap to advance women's economic power in Illinois—**The Women's Economic Power Agenda (WEPA) Summit**.

Together we focused on driving collective impact around the shared goal of a more equitable and inclusive economic landscape for women, their families, and their communities in Illinois—policies, programs, practices, and actions that lead to more money in women's wallets TODAY, not generations from now.

The resulting report, **Women's Economic Power Agenda for Illinois**, which is available in both English and Spanish, not only provides a glimpse of the Summit, but most importantly, crystallizes the key takeaways and recommendations shaped by the over 50 participating organizations, and dozens of workers themselves. On behalf of Women Employed, we're excited to share the **WEPA Report** with you!

[Download the WEPA Report](#)

We Chat with Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton



We Chat with Women Employed



We were honored to co-host a We Chat event with Lieutenant Governor of Illinois Juliana Stratton, and be in community with women at Momentum Coffee, on Thursday, April 4th. As part of Lt. Gov. Stratton's We Thrive initiative, which focuses on fostering health, freedom, and resilience for all women in Illinois, the We Chat conversation was a phenomenal opportunity to hear directly from women about their experiences, their needs, and what would build their economic power.

Women Employed President and CEO Cherita Ellens joined the Lieutenant Governor in moderating the conversation, and had this to say, "For communities to thrive, we must build the economic power of women. We must understand their unique experiences and needs, which vary by race, ethnicity, income level, neighborhood, and so many other factors."

Thank you to Momentum Coffee for hosting us in your beautiful space. And thank you to everyone who attended and shared your voices. You were seen, you were heard, and we learned so much from you that will drive our work forward.



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

We Provide
**Sexual
Harassment
Prevention
Training**

for Employees
AND
Supervisors



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and we encourage you to raise awareness and engage in the prevention of sexual assault, harassment, and abuse.

Women Employed has been speaking out about sexual harassment in the workplace for over 50 years. As part of our commitment to helping create safe, dignified, and fair workplaces for everyone, we're also a resource for both survivors and employers by providing fact sheets and information on the laws and your rights, as well as sexual harassment prevention training through [WE Consulting](#).

- Did you know sexual harassment violates the law when:
- You must submit to sexual demands to keep your job. These demands can be spoken or unspoken.
 - An employer makes employment decisions about you depending on whether or not you submit to sexual demands. These decisions can be about hiring, promotions, raises, or other employment issues.
 - The behavior creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Learn more about other examples of sexual harassment, your employer's responsibility, what you can do if you are harassed, and filing a complaint here: <https://womenemployed.org/sexual-harassment-and-your-rights-on-the-job/>

And download your PDF version of the factsheet here: <https://womenemployed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SexualHarassment.pdf>

If you're an employer who needs sexual harassment prevention training for your employees or supervisors, WE can help! Contact Ibie Hart, Director of Business Development, at ihart@womenemployed.org to learn more!

Know Your Paid Leave Rights

Did You Know?



As of January 1st, workers in Illinois have a right to earn and use paid time off.

Learn more:
sicktimeil.org

More than 1.5 million Illinois workers now have access to paid leave through the Paid Leave for All Workers Act. Under the new law, which went into effect on January 1st, full- and part-time workers can earn up to 40 hours of paid leave per year. This new paid leave benefit can be used for any reason, including: recovering from your own illness, caring for a sick family member, school closures, reasons related to domestic or sexual violence, visiting a family member in jail or prison and other court-related reasons, and COVID-19 related reasons such as the need to quarantine or get vaccinated.

Work in Illinois? Make sure you know your paid leave rights! Learn more at sicktimeil.org.

AND help spread the word! Make sure your family and friends know their rights too! [Download our digital toolkit](#) and share our posts and graphics.

*Note: Workers in Chicago and Cook County may have different rights. [Check out this fact sheet](#) to learn more about which rights apply to you.

AANHPI Equal Pay Day

#AANHPIEqualPayDay



WE ARE NOT A MONOLITH

AANHPI includes 50+ ethnic subgroups speaking 100+ languages & dialects. The wage gap is drastically different



drastically different
for each of those
communities.



April 3rd was AANHPI Equal Pay Day. When looking at both full- and part-time workers, the average Asian American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander woman is paid 80¢ for every \$1.00 paid to white, non-Hispanic men. AANHPI women working full-time, year-round make 93¢ for every \$1.00 paid to a white, non-Hispanic man. But, that's only part of the AANHPI Equal Pay story.

For certain communities, the wage gap is far greater. Vietnamese, Hmong, and Burmese women are some of the lowest-paid people in the nation. AANHPI women need comprehensive equal pay policies, such as fair pay and union representation, that would help break harmful patterns of pay discrimination and strengthen workplace protections.

The wage gap isn't just a number, it is a story of inequity. Visit equalpayillinois.org to learn your equal pay rights in Illinois and be a part of the solution.

Join Our Next Advocacy Council Meeting

ADVANCE THE MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EQUITY

Wednesday, April 17th for
our Advocacy Council
meeting from
5:30-7:00 pm CST

RSVP to Michelle Schwartz at
[mschwartz@womenemployed.org](mailto:m Schwartz@womenemployed.org)

Join us!

Women Employed's **Advocacy Council** is an informed group of volunteers who meet monthly to organize and advocate to advance WE's mission—to improve the economic status of women and remove barriers to economic equity.

What does the Advocacy Council do?

- WE mobilize our networks through events, e-advocacy, and social media to bring the voices of young women to the movement for change.
- WE inform personal and professional networks about the problem of low-paid work and what we can do together to solve it.
- WE advocate to improve public policies to ensure fairness and open opportunities.
- WE "Friendraise" and fundraise to strengthen Women Employed's programs.

Our next meeting is TONIGHT, and WE would love for you to join us! **Registration is required.**

[Register Now](#)

Where in the World is Women Employed





As April ushered in plenty of rain and sunshine, it also brought with it the call for Women Employed to show up at several events across Chicago, Springfield, and even Washington, D.C.! Starting with a continuation of Women's History Month celebrations, WE made appearances at forums, receptions, conferences, radio interviews, and fairs. We even met up with a former Summer Leader and a group of Girl Scouts who share an extra special connection to WE.

Read on to find out where we've been this month and be sure to read all the way to the end so you'll know where we're going next!

[Read More](#)

We're Halfway There!



Thanks to our amazing supporters, Women Employed has been a Top-Rated Nonprofit at [GreatNonprofits.org](https://www.GreatNonprofits.org) for years. This year, we have the chance to win a \$20,000 media package from GreatNonprofits, enabling us to widen our audience and share our work to benefit even more people!

As part of this stellar media package, WE will:

- Be featured in a GreatNonprofits blog post.
- Be mentioned on Twitter and Facebook.
- Be profiled in a GreatNonProfits email to over 400K donors.
- Have prominent placement on the GreatNonprofits website.

Help us expand our reach, by taking three minutes to **share YOUR connection to WE**. All we need are 10 five-star reviews by June 30, 2024! WE thank you for your continued support!

[Write a Review](#)

WE In The News

[Driving it Home w/ Patti Vasquez](#)

WCPT 820 – Chicago's Progressive Talk

[How to improve economic equity for women in Illinois: Report outlines several recommendations](#)

WBBM

What We're Reading

[Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women and the Wage Gap](#)

National Partnership for Women and Families

[Child care benefits for workers effectively pay for themselves, new study finds](#)

Axios

[Wraparound Strategies for Supporting Black Working Mothers' Career Success](#)

Jobs for the Future

[Truths About DEI on College Campuses](#)

University of Southern California

[Care Matters: A 2024 Report Card for Policies in the States](#)

The Century Foundation

[Women of Color Need a Vacation](#)

National Partnership for Women and Families

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