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WE-Zine



PROGRESS, DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX



Dear %%FirstName%%,

In our post-pandemic society, it seems that we are busier than ever. Many people are juggling the demands of work, children, caring for elderly parents, inflation, politics and injustice, and that's all in a day's work. In addition to these demands, the pace at which we are expected to live and produce can keep us in a never-ending cycle of survival mode. While in survival mode, we are not present. It's almost as if we are on autopilot, just "making it through the day." We become reactionary rather than intentional and can find ourselves not feeling in control of our day-to-day lives. How can we end this cycle? Self-care.

Self-care can be described as the intentional actions we take to boost our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The operative word here being intentional. We cannot rely on our daily/weekly schedules to naturally make space for self-care. It will never happen. So, we must be intentional about incorporating it into our daily/weekly routines. The first step is to understand what self-care looks like for you. Social media influencers may try to convince you that self-care is a luxurious spa day at an expensive resort. Sure, that would be amazing, but that's not realistic for many of us on a daily/weekly basis. So, what is realistic? Ask yourself—what restores you on a physical, mental, and emotional level? Consider everything—there is nothing too silly or trivial. Remember, simple activities are easier to incorporate into your routines than large-scale ones.

The second step of being intentional about self-care is not mischaracterizing it as a "treat" in exchange for hard work. Self-care isn't a prize that we award ourselves after a long week of survival mode. You don't need to "earn" self-care. Reimagine self-care from being the light at the end of the tunnel to the flashlight that you carry with you. This means self-care doesn't have to wait until the end of the workday. You can incorporate it by using time-off to unplug and recharge, having clear boundaries about work hours, or maybe taking nature walks during breaks. Women Employed's time-off policy was written to support self-care. Whether that's taking a sick day when you need it or flexing an hour during the afternoon for a much-needed yoga session, it's there for your use! That same ethos of flexible paid time off is incorporated into the paid leave laws we've advocated for an won in Chicago and Illinois.

Everyone's self-care routine will look different. Your own routine may change depending on your time, energy, and commitments. The key is to be intentional about your physical, mental, and emotional well-being as consistent and as often as possible. In honor of Social Wellness Month and BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month, I hope you are inspired to reimagine self-care and how you can create mini moments of joy and rest throughout your day and week!

In Solidarity,

Kendra Randall
Associate Director of People and Culture

"She Says" with Lily Rocha



SHE SAYS

LILY ROCHA

I think there are still a lot of conversations that we need to have surrounding what mental health care is, especially in Black and Brown communities where we might not be as open about those topics. So, working for NAMI Chicago really allows me to do that.



July is both BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month and Social Wellness Month. And as hard as it is to believe, with all of the resources that are available to us, the topic of mental health is still taboo in many communities, namely due to stigma and access. But if we could imagine a world where mental health services were more easily accessible, were part of more conversations, and were better funded, then maybe there wouldn't be as much shame surrounding it. At least that's what Lily Rocha, Associate Vice President of Policy for [NAMI Chicago](#) thinks.

Lily, who is also a former Women Employed (WE) staff member, has worked in the mental health field in various capacities throughout her career. From assisting with a stigma reduction campaign while working in Congress to advocating for funding for mental health services on Illinois college campuses, Lily understands the need for mental health services and how it can positively impact a person's life. Especially in her current role where she is helping to create a better mental health system for people in Chicago and throughout Illinois.

In this month's ["She Says,"](#) Lily Rocha talks with us about her work with NAMI Chicago, what people need to know about maintaining their mental health, and how to destigmatize the need for mental health care.

[Read More](#)

Statement: Equitable Funding Bill Introduction



Yesterday, we were proud to join the [Coalition on Transforming Higher Education Funding](#), as well as policymakers, universities, faculty, and others, to mark the introduction of SB 3965, the Adequate and Equitable Public University Funding Act. This legislation represents the next step toward an Illinois public university funding approach that focuses on ensuring institutions have the funding they need to serve the students they have, building adequacy, equity, stability, accountability, and transparency into the process.

Happy Parents' Day!



This past Sunday, July 28th made 30 years since Congress passed "The Parents' Day Resolution," making every fourth Sunday in July National Parents' Day. It is a day where parents are honored for the role they play in raising and supporting the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of their children, with some organizations awarding parents for their exemplary efforts. And one way to ensure that parents can continue being a presence in their children's lives is through paid leave.

Did you know that more than 1.5 million additional 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 or your children's illnesses, school closures, catching your child's school play, going on a family vacation, or COVID-19 related reasons such as the need to quarantine or get vaccinated.

But that's not all. As of July 1st, most workers in the City of Chicago gained the right to earn five days of paid leave, in addition to the five days of paid sick time they were already entitled to earn. We're also fighting for paid family and medical leave for Illinois to cover longer-term care needs.

To learn more about your paid leave rights in Illinois, visit sicktimeil.org.

And if you work in Chicago, visit sicktimechicago.org.

Make Sure You're Registered to Vote



The 2024 election will be historic, and it will have important ramifications for women and families. The spotlight on Kamala Harris has fueled a conversation about leadership, working women, and the challenges and barriers we still face—especially Women of Color.

One thing is clear. None of us can sit on the sidelines. Now is the time to engage in our democracy. The issues that matter to working women are at stake this year. The first step is to make sure you are registered to vote! Even if you have been registered in the past, make sure you are still registered, and if not, complete your registration information. Then learn where ALL the candidates stand on the issues that matter to you, and make your plan to vote. You can do all of this at <https://www.ballotready.org/>.

(Note: information on your candidates and your ballot may not be available until after all presidential candidates have been confirmed.)

WE Loves Our Interns



On Thursday, July 25th, the future leaders of tomorrow, better known as interns, were recognized and celebrated across the country for National Intern Day. Whether they are taking on large projects, learning different industries, or shadowing seasoned professionals as they prepare to enter the workforce, we applaud them for their hard work and dedication.

Here at WE, we understand that taking the next big step in one's career is no easy feat, and we are proud to help mold the next generation of leaders and changemakers. We value their expertise, willingness to learn, and passion for wanting to create a more equitable world where we all can thrive.

To our fearless interns—whether they are part of the Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program, Adler University's Social Justice Practicum, or another program—WE thank you for the contributions you have made to our team and can't wait to see how you will crash ceilings, open doors, and expand opportunities for those who need it most.

National Disability Independence Day





National Disability Independence Day is celebrated every year on July 26th. In order to plot a more intentional course toward systemic change that achieves the inclusion, access, liberation, and economic health and wellbeing of disabled women and families, we're sharing the [National Partnership for Women & Families' Disability Economic Justice Systems Transformation Guide](#).

This guide examines the systemic barriers that disabled women, particularly disabled Women of Color, and their families face in obtaining and maintaining employment. As we celebrate the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act this month, we also recognize the necessary strides that are still needed to make toward full inclusion and equity for disabled people.

Read the full report here: <https://bit.ly/4c30Kn>

Black Women's Equal Pay Day

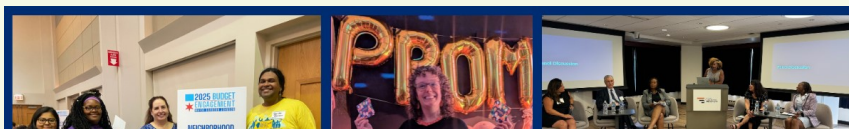
A graphic with a yellow background. At the top, it reads: "On average, Black women working full-time and part-time are paid just 66¢ for every \$1.00 paid to white men." Below the text is an illustration of a Black woman and a white man. To the right of the illustration is the hashtag "#BlackWomensEqualPay" and the Women Employed logo, which consists of a stylized bar chart icon and the text "Women Employed".

July 9th was Black Women's Equal Pay Day and based on Census data from 2022, the average Black woman earns just 66¢ compared to a non-Hispanic white man's \$1 when looking at both full- and part-time workers.

Since our country's founding, racism and sexism have shaped the structure of our economy, laws, and policies. As a result, pay discrimination and occupational segregation—the segregation of women into low-paid and undervalued jobs—have long inflicted harm upon Black women in the workforce. The resulting injustice affects individuals on a personal level, as well as their children, families, communities, and our economy. Changing this is intricately tied to fair and equitable wages, better jobs, and equal opportunities. The need for both equal pay and higher pay is urgent.

Institutional racism is a thing, and combating it is a large part of the reason for observing Black Women's Equal Pay Day. **Make sure you know your equal pay rights**, and join us and our partners on the [Equal Pay Chicago Coalition](#) to raise awareness about the wage gap that impacts Black women and their families!

Where in the World is Women Employed?





Where in the World Is



At Women Employed, we know a few things about not being all work and no play. We also know you can make an impact AND have a good time doing it. For instance, this month, we attended a '90s-themed prom, an outdoor festival, and we were even invited to the White House for the 60th Anniversary of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. We also facilitated trainings, attended conferences, and advocated for the needs of Chicagoans at the 2025 City Budget Roundtables. We know it can be nearly impossible to keep up with all our meetings, events, and work in the community, so we have compiled a recap for you, our dedicated supporters, so you're not left wondering where we've been and what we've been up to.

Enjoy this month's edition of [Where in the World is Women Employed](#) and make sure to read all the way to the end to learn where we'll be next!

[Read More](#)

WE is Seeking Input from Healthcare Workers and Could Use Your Help



Women Employed (WE) is actively looking for Chicago healthcare workers who began in entry-level roles (e.g., Nursing Assistant, Medical Assistant, Phlebotomy Tech) and advanced to higher wage/supervisory/mid-level roles, with or without additional credentials. WE is conducting focus groups and interviews with an estimated time commitment of 30-60 minutes and \$50 compensation. If you know someone who fits this profile, [please share this flyer](#) and encourage them to use the QR code to express their willingness to participate. and encourage them to use the QR code to express their willingness to participate.

We want to learn about the barriers and successes that healthcare workers experience when advancing in their careers as part of a study of healthcare career pathways. Our goal is to advocate for changes that will create quicker, more reliable pathways to well-paying, quality healthcare jobs.

WE In The News

[Working women are Chicago's backbone, and they deserve better employment opportunities](#)

The Chicago Sun-Times

What We're Reading

[Rise of women's sports brings greater emphasis on maternity and parental needs](#)

The Associated Press

[How Racism and Sexism Lead Black Women to Entrepreneurship](#)

Urban Institute

[Seven Ways Federal Policymakers Can Improve the Lives of Disabled People](#)

Urban Institute

[The Crisis of Low Wages: Who earns less than \\$17 an hour in the U.S. in 2024?](#)

Oxfam

[Menopause stigma is impeding women's career growth, survey says. Here's how a lack of support is hampering ambition —and the economy](#)

Fortune Well

[Older and wiser, but not richer: The gender pay gap for older workers](#)

U.S. Department of Labor Blog



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