

WHEN A DIVERSE GROUP OF  
CARING, COMMITTED  
**WOMEN**  
GET TOGETHER TO CREATE CHANGE,  
**ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE**

United Way of Northwest Vermont's Women's Leadership Council invites everyone to work together to support women for the betterment of our community.



United Way of  
Northwest Vermont

# WE HARNESS THE POWER OF WOMEN TO HELP WOMEN IN NEED



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Northwest Vermont

## UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST VERMONT WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

We believe the power of women to encourage community involvement that helps provide others with Education, Income and Health – the building blocks for a quality life. Together we will engage the community in networking and educational events, volunteer activities, and advocacy, and we support our signature issue through philanthropy.

## ADVANCING WOMEN'S FINANCIAL STABILITY

The Women's Leadership Council believes by empowering women and promoting women's financial stability we can positively influence a family's ability to meet basic needs, educate her and her children and achieve optimal health and well being.

United Way works to improve Income embraces people meeting their most basic needs: food, shelter and stable employment. When we look at how our neighbors are doing, we see there is a lot of work to be done. Too many of our neighbors – even those with jobs – are unable to meet their basic needs. Many of them are women and majority of those women are single mothers. We believe that we can make a difference by taking a two-generational approach that includes supports for women and their families.

### OUR VISION

A woman's income level impacts her health, her education and the education of her children, as well as her ability to provide for her family. The Women's Leadership Council expects a community where all women can find employment that empowers them to meet or exceed their family's basic needs. We want to create a community where women thrive.

WE EXPECT

A community with a thriving economy and enough stable jobs to support its residents

WE EXPECT

A community where a working woman can find employment that empowers her to be financially independent

WE EXPECT

A community that supports women in times of need with safety net programs that allow a family to meet their essential needs after unanticipated drops in income due to divorce, loss of employment or other crises

# FINANCIAL STABILITY OF VERMONT WOMEN & FAMILIES

The harsh truth is too many working Vermonters do not earn an income that covers the cost of basic needs – and more than half of them are women.

Vermont's current minimum wage is \$9.15 per hour – only 58% of what it takes for just one person to live.

This difference between what's necessary to live and what people earn is a growing problem that needs our attention. Between 2007 and 2013, the poverty rate for families headed by single mothers climbed above 40 percent, and for those with the youngest children, the increase was even greater. According to the *State Of Working Vermont 2014*, 46% of married couples with children and 81% of single mothers earn too little to meet their basic needs.

Let's seize the opportunity to make a real difference. Through philanthropy, advocacy and volunteerism, the Women's Leadership Council will support women in our community and help create opportunities for all women and their children to succeed.

A basic needs budget includes the minimum – it's a bare bones budget based on the local cost of rent and utilities, food, childcare, health insurance, transportation, clothing, household expenses, taxes and savings of less than 5 percent of total income. Vermont is an expensive place to live; even working Vermonters cannot afford the basics.



**a single woman**

**MUST EARN \$15.81/HOUR**  
OR AN ANNUAL SALARY OF \$31,620



**a married couple  
with two children**

**MUST EACH EARN \$18.56/HOUR**  
OR TOTAL ANNUAL SALARY OF \$78,667



**a single mother  
of two children**

**MUST EARN \$29.82/HOUR**  
OR AN ANNUAL SALARY OF \$51,381

# 5 Things We Can Do Now

1

**INVEST:** Today's women need to think of themselves as providers for their family. We must empower women through education, skills training and programs that promote financial literacy, female earning power and savings.

2

**EDUCATE:** Learn more about this issue and the reasons why women in our community struggle. Speak up about the importance of continuing education and professional skills training.

3

**ENGAGE:** These issues belong to everyone. Getting everyone involved, including fathers, sons, and brothers is part of the solution.

4

**INFLUENCE:** Recognize the power of your voice and the strength of working together. Support businesses that provide benefits and workplace supports for employees. Encourage friends and loved ones to join you in helping women succeed.

5

**MENTOR:** Foster the mindset that girls have the power to succeed if they invest in themselves. Share the importance of making smart decisions – financial, personal and educational – that will enhance career prospects.

## OUR APPROACH

This is a complex community issue. As a community we must provide access to education and skill development, family resources and income supports to increase financial stability. We must do this through a holistic, two-generational approach that aligns mutually reinforcing programs, resources and policy change.

Though our focus is on women, our vision is aligned with United Way's Income impact area, one of the building blocks of a better life. United Way has the networks, partnerships and strategic initiatives to lead our community toward long-term, sustainable change. United Way is the organization to convene the community around these issues, advocate for systemic change and invest in solutions to address the root causes of women in poverty.

## GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

The Women's Leadership Council invites all to work together to develop philanthropic power as community investors, advocates and volunteers. We encourage members to support United Way with a gift of \$500 or more (\$250 for young professionals and retirees).

For questions or more information about joining Women's Leadership Council, please contact Ruthann Hackett at 802-861-7831.

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL STEERING COMMITTEE

Sarah Andriano, Champlain College

Heidi Auclair, Morway's Moving & Storage

Jessica Brumsted, Community Volunteer

Stephanie Dion, University of Vermont

Yael Friedman, University of Vermont Medical Center

Rebecca Gamble, Community Volunteer

Wanda Heading-Grant, University of Vermont

Ellen Kane, Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington

Cari Kelley, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce

Gov. Madeleine Kunin, University of Vermont

Michell Langlais\*, Westport Hospitality

Martha Maksym, United Way of Northwest Vermont

Melinda Moulton, Main Street Landing Company

Linda Seaver, Community Volunteer

Amy Shea, Westport Hospitality

Rubi Simon, Fletcher Free Library

Meg Smith, Vermont Women's Fund

Janet Spittler, Housing Vermont

Linda Tarr-Whelan\*, Activist & Author

Martha Trombley-Oakes, Vermont Community Foundation

Annie Wohland, UVM Social Work Student

*\*Committee Co-chairs*



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