



2006 Year-end Update

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*Generating research - Informing policy
Improving women's lives*

New Leadership

2006 has been a year of tremendous growth and development for the Women's Policy Institute (WPI). We have also undergone important leadership changes. In June we bid farewell to our founding board chair Marjorie Smith. After five years of hard work and devoted leadership, Marjorie has passed the baton to a "second wave" of board leaders. WPI has built increased capacity to fulfill our mission through new staff and new projects. Many thanks to those who joined our reception in Portsmouth to honor Marjorie's many contributions and to celebrate the next chapter of WPI.

In October we welcomed our first executive director, Katie Merrow. Katie comes to us from the NH Center for Public Policy Studies, bringing policy and research experience and a strong network of relationships with community and business leaders throughout New Hampshire. The addition of full-time professional staff has already propelled us forward with new initiatives and new energy.

With Katie Merrow at the helm, energetic and talented new Board leadership, and elected officials committed to the well-being of NH women in the state legislature, I am confident that the Women's Policy Institute is well positioned to make meaningful contributions to public policies important to women, families and communities across the state. We look forward to your continued support and involvement in 2007.

Jennifer Frizzell, Chair

New Challenges Ahead

There are two reasons I came to the Women's Policy Institute: what we know and what we don't know about women in New Hampshire. Because of WPI's work, we have a better understanding of women's economic status. We know women make up 47 percent of the workforce, comprise 67 percent of those working at or near minimum wage, and earn 72 percent of what men earn. For the first time we understand the long-term effects of family care-giving and occupational choices on women's earnings, and can use that information to inform our choices and plan for the future. WPI's work has focused discussion on women's economic security by highlighting the relatively lower earnings in certain occupations and regions of the state, calling for policies that strengthen paths out of poverty and provide supports to low-wage working women.

We have much to celebrate regarding the well-being of women in New Hampshire, but there is work to be done and much we don't know. Policy makers and business leaders need unbiased data on women's health, retirement security, and economic well-being to formulate policies that ensure effective expenditure of public funds, support women most in need, and maximize women's contributions to their families, communities, and the economy. We welcome your participation as we work to support these efforts.

Katie Merrow, Executive Director

Know the facts...
about women in New Hampshire.
Visit our new website at www.nhwpi.org

Thanks to our 2005-2006 donors - Please consider making a year-end gift to WPI.

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Our mission is to generate research, encourage policy discussion, and educate the public in order to inform decision-making and promote the value of women in New Hampshire.

Research News

NH wage gap greater than neighboring states'

Since WPI published *The Economic Status of Working Women in NH*, neighboring states have begun reporting on women's economic status in their states. Maine recently designated benchmarks to track progress over time, and Dr. Marilyn Gittell of the City University of New York has partnered with Ross Gittell, lead author of WPI's first report, to compare economic status in New York & New Hampshire.

So how do New Hampshire's women fare compared to our neighbors? They are less likely to live in poverty than women in other New England states: in New Hampshire nine percent live below the poverty line, compared to 11 percent in Vermont, 14 percent in Maine, and 16 percent in New York.¹ This ranking is not surprising given the state's relatively high income overall.

Relative to men, however, women in New Hampshire are disproportionately represented in the lower income brackets of the full-time labor force, more so than in New York. Over 60 percent of full-time workers earning less than \$25,000 in Hampshire are women, compared to 52 to 55 percent in New York.² New Hampshire's wage gap is greater than other New England states and New York; women earn 72 percent of what men earn, compared to 77 to 82 percent in neighboring states.³

New Hampshire's wage gap varies by region

While the statewide wage ratio is 72 percent, there is considerable variation within New Hampshire. The average by city varies from a low of 64 percent in Berlin to a high of 84 percent in Keene.⁴ Recent research by Dr. Ross Gittell and Alison Churilla of UNH shows that regions with larger

wage gaps tend to have greater earnings potential for men and to have a greater proportion of families with children. Their analysis shows wage disparity to be greatest in the northern and central regions of the state, while women's wages in the greater Keene and Seacoast areas are closer to men's earnings.⁵

Women in corporate leadership—it takes three

Having three women on a corporate board creates critical mass, according to recent research from the Wellesley Centers for Women.⁶ With three women on a board, women directors are reportedly better able to focus a board on multiple stakeholders, encourage discussion of difficult issues, and foster an open and collaborative process.

In New Hampshire, one publicly held company had three female directors in 2002. In 2004, 16 of 29 public companies had no women on their boards. In New Hampshire women comprised eight percent of all directors of public corporations, compared to 13 percent in national Fortune 500 companies.⁷

¹ *Working Women in Maine, Initial Indicators for Progress, 2006* at <http://mainegov-images.informe.org>.

² Presentation at the Carsey Institute by Dr. Marilyn Gittell of the City University of New York, Nov. 2006.

³ *Working Women in Maine*.

⁴ Gittell, Churilla, and McAdam, NH Women's Policy Institute, *The Economic Status of Working Women in New Hampshire*, 2005, available at www.nhwpi.org.

⁵ Presentation at the Carsey Institute by Dr. Ross Gittell and Alison Churilla, November 2006.

⁶ Kramer, Konrad and Erkut, *Critical mass on Corporate Boards*, Wellesley Centers for Women 2006, available at www.wcwonline.

⁷ Gittell, Churilla, and McAdam, NHWPI.

WPI research on the road

- In August WPI sponsored Alison Churilla of UNH to present WPI findings and new research on women's occupational choices at a meeting of the American Sociological Association.
- In September WPI co-hosted a discussion of motherhood and work with the Women's Fund of New Hampshire. Leslie Morgan Steiner, author of *Mommy Wars*, led the discussion.
- WPI's research on the economic status of women has been presented at the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Exeter Hospital, the Carsey Institute, the NH Women's Lobby conference, and other venues.

If you would like WPI to present to your group, call us at (603) 491-0959 or email kmerrow@nhwpi.org.

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Our Board of Directors

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WPI sends our thanks to outgoing board member Marianne DiMascio, one of our founding directors.