

New England Women's Policy Conference
November 18, 2016
Panel Descriptions

During the afternoon of this conference, there will be two 90-minute sections that follow five issue areas from our Call to Action. You will need to select one of these tracks at the point of registration. We hope to be able to give everyone their first choice of the track sessions, but due to room constraints you may not get your first choice.

Track 1: Wages and Income Security

Pathway to Passing Pay Equity Legislation – 1:00 – 2:30 pm

The pathway to passing pay equity legislation can be daunting and difficult; however, as shown by the recent victory in Massachusetts, it is definitely possible to succeed with overwhelming support. The panel focuses on process, people and tools that can propel legislation forward. Discussion on what has worked and what hasn't worked in the path to passing pay equity legislation will give participants valuable insights to bring to their own state-based efforts.

Considerations in Implementing Pay Equity Practices – 3:00 – 4:30 pm

For real movement on pay equity, organizations must be willing and able to implement fair pay practices. This panel focuses on real successes and challenges that private, public and non-profit organizations face in implementing pay equity practices, as well as resources and tools that have been developed to assist organizations. Discussion on what works and what doesn't work will give those looking to implement pay equity practices and proven strategies that can help advance their own efforts.

Track 2: Workforce Development and Training

Good Jobs for Women: Getting Business on Board – 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Recent strategies for opening up good jobs in the construction trades for women have relied heavily on labor/management partnerships. This workshop will describe the successes that have led to significant increases in women's participation in the construction workforce and, using construction as one dynamic and current case, will look critically at the role of business in social change and the extent of the business sector's commitment to radical alterations in business practices

How Workforce Development Policies Impact Women in New England? – 3:00 – 4:30 pm

In 2014, major federal workforce legislation – the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – was signed into law. Among other changes, the new law calls for a stronger focus on career pathways and priorities for low-income individuals. This workshop will provide an overview of the key provisions of WIOA, in addition to updates on other federal legislation. State advocates will then discuss their plans for implementing WIOA, as well as other state-specific workforce advocacy efforts, with a focus on the impact for women accessing living wage jobs.

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Track 3: Health and Family Leave

Policy Relevant Research on Paid Family and Medical Leave: What Do We Know? What Do We Need to Know? - 1:00 pm -2:30 pm

With no federal paid family and medical leave policy, some states have created their own programs and other states have new legislation pending. State-specific policy relevant research becomes critical in launching the discussion and demonstrating support for a policy, as well as showing who has access to employer-provided paid leave for different types of leave. Additionally, actuarial analyses are important to understand the costs of a program and how the costs would vary depending on different program parameters. Finally, program evaluation of existing state-run programs can help fine tune the policy and identify gaps in knowledge and participation.

Legislative Campaigns for Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance: Successes and Challenges in the New England States – 3:00 -4:30 pm

To date, three states (California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island) have passed paid family and medical leave legislation and are using their existing Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) systems to implement these new laws. Momentum is building across the nation, particularly in New England, as many states in our region have legislation pending or under consideration. This panel of state legislators and coalition leaders will discuss the successes and challenges each have faced in their own state as they champion paid family and medical leave insurance legislation and consider models other than TDI.

Track 4: Early Care and Education

Valuing the Early Care & Education Workforce: Statewide Policy Campaigns – 1:00 – 2:30 pm

While some public conversations about early care and education have centered on accessibility and affordability for parents, in many states there are also efforts underway to focus attention on the challenging economic situation for the providers, most of whom are paid close to minimum wage and often have few benefits. This panel will present statewide campaigns from Vermont, Massachusetts, and other New England states that are integrating the need for economic justice for providers into the broader discussion of access to high quality, affordable early care and education.

**Creating a Sustainable Early Care and Education Workforce: Strategies from the Private Sector
3:00 -4:30 pm**

Businesses and employers are increasingly recognizing the role that a strong system of high quality early care and education plays in the strength of the economy as a whole and in their own ability to recruit and retain a skilled workforce. Through workplace policies, legislative advocacy, innovative funding strategies, and other high-visibility tactics, these panelists have found ways to broaden and elevate the conversation about the needs of the early care and education workforce in both the business community and the public realm.

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Track 5: Elder Care

Home Health Care Workforce: Improving Wages and Benefits – 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Home care workers provide an invaluable service of care to our families and communities as they care for our seniors, yet they struggle to care for their own families because of low wages. Low wages perpetuate high burnout and turnover, strain the home care system and jeopardize these critical services. This panel will discuss the issue of home health care wages and benefits in terms of the policies of the US Department of Labor and the experiences of home health care providers in Massachusetts and Maine.

Creating a Stable Home Health Care Workforce: Recruitment, Retention and Career Ladders

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

The desperate demand for paid home health care workers far exceeds the current supply of trained home health care workers. Challenges include low wages, commuting from one patient to another, tedious paperwork, and lack of resources to provide adequate and comprehensive care for patients in their homes. In this panel we will discuss the challenges of recruiting and retaining home health care workers and possible solutions for creating career advancement within the field from perspectives of an academic researcher and two home health care providers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.