

2017 Legislative Outcomes

Why Do We Engage in Public Policy?

The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) employs many strategies to create systemic change for Colorado women and girls. Public policy is one of the most effective ways to eradicate barriers that keep women and their families from earning a livable wage.

Since 1987, WFCO and our partners have successfully supported bills that improve access to: fair and equal wages, affordable high-quality child care, family planning, education, job training in high-growth industries, and more.

WFCO applies a gender lens to the following policy priorities:

- Address root causes of poverty and promote self-sufficiency
- Advance opportunities to achieve a livable wage and pay equity
- Expand access to work supports, training, and education
- Improve Colorado's tax and budget policies to allow for sufficient resources to be dedicated to WFCO priorities
- Promote and protect issues and rights aligned with the core values of WFCO

2017 Results

During Colorado's 2017 legislative session, The Women's Foundation of Colorado and our partners backed 12 measures to advance and accelerate economic opportunities for Colorado women and their families.

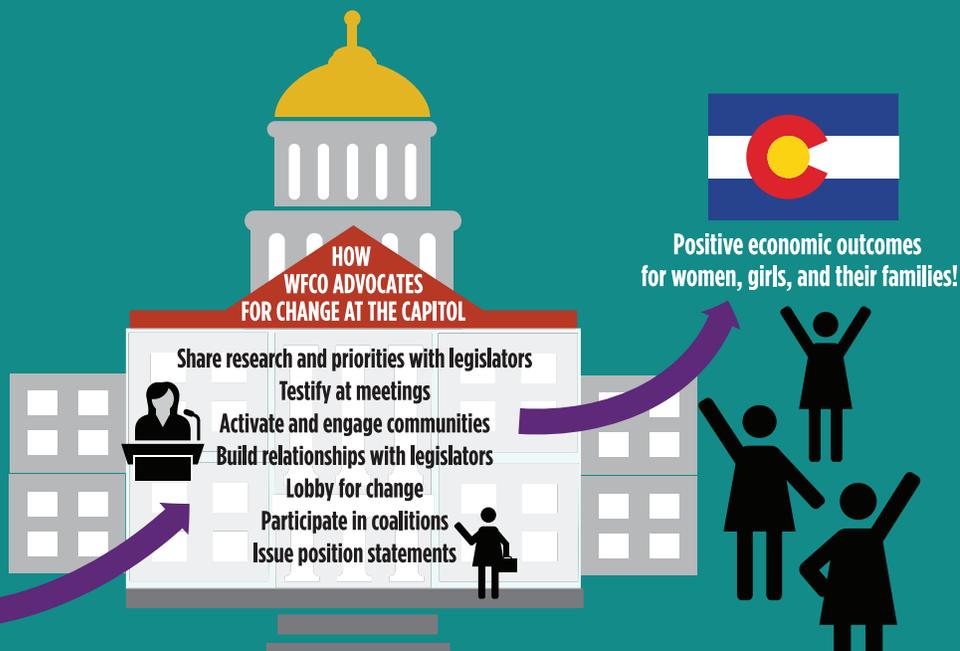
We're proud to announce that six of the 12 bills and/or resolutions passed – including bills that create more pathways to equal pay, access to STEM opportunities for girls, and economic support for low-income women paying for child care.

We would like to thank our partners statewide who helped us make progress toward prosperity for women in our state, including 9to5 Colorado, The Bell Policy Center, Colorado Center on Law & Policy, Colorado Children's Campaign, Colorado Fiscal Institute, Colorado Succeeds, Frontline Public Affairs, public policy committee members and advisors, regional committee members and advocates, The Chambers Fund, and WomenGive – United Way of Larimer County.

CREATING SYSTEMIC CHANGE THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

THE WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION
OF COLORADO

1. Conduct research and gather input from grantees
2. Identify barriers to women's economic self-sufficiency
3. Invest in expert organizations leading change
4. Connect our partners to develop policy solutions



Catalyzing community to advance and accelerate economic opportunities for Colorado women and their families.

Continued >

Passed

House Bill 17-1002 – Child Care Expenses Income Tax Credit Extension

This bill will help low-income women and families offset the high costs of child care, which could be up to half their incomes. A residential individual who has a federal adjusted gross income of \$25,000 or less may claim a refundable state income tax credit for child care expenses. The tax credit is equal to 25% of eligible child care expenses that the individual incurred during the taxable year, up to a maximum amount of \$500 for a single dependent or \$1,000 for two or more dependents. The bill extends the tax credit for three more income tax years.

House Bill 17-1021 – Wage Theft Transparency Act

When information about wage theft is made public, this transparency is more likely to ensure fair and equal wages moving forward. Wage theft refers to a situation where an employer requires an employee to work off the clock, does not pay overtime, or commits other labor law violations. Currently the law treats wage theft as a trade secret, and instances are not made public.

House Joint Resolution 17-1022 – Equal Pay Day Resolution

The Colorado General Assembly designated April 4, 2017 as Equal Pay Day in Colorado to acknowledge the persisting problem of wage disparity among various groups.

House Bill 17-1135 – Portability Background Checks Child Care Workers

Following WFCO's 2014 Child Care Affordability Research with Qualistar Colorado and the Colorado Children's Campaign, we recommended that Colorado child care centers explore innovative practices to improve efficiency. The bill creates a new provision that allows a child care worker who is employed in a licensed facility that is wholly owned, operated, and controlled by a common ownership group or school district to transfer the background check to another licensed facility that is owned, operated, or controlled by the same common ownership group or school district. This efficiency can save costs for child care employers and workforce and expedite employment.

House Bill 17-1184 – Modern Technology Education in Public School: Computer Science & Technology Training for Students & Teachers

This bill will add technology skills into current content standards. It will also require the Colorado Department of Education to create a publicly available and voluntary resource bank that will include a list of industry experts who can co-teach computer science in the classroom. When girls and other underserved populations have access to STEM education they are more likely to continue their studies in these fields.

House Bill 17-1269 – Extend Pay Transparency Protections to All Employees

Wage transparency promotes fair and equal wages among workers. Policies like this one ensure that women in the workplace are legally able to share their salary and/or wages. Current law states that it is a discriminatory and unfair labor practice for an employer to discharge, discipline, discriminate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any employee or other person because the employee inquired about, disclosed, compared, or otherwise discussed the employee's wages, unless otherwise permitted by federal law. Federal law exempts certain limited classes of employers, including federal and state governments, from labor laws. The bill strikes the reference to that exemption and extends the current law to those classes of employers, thereby providing wage transparency protections to all employees.

Did Not Pass

House Bill 17-1001 – Parental Involvement in K-12 Education Act

Research has consistently shown that increased parental involvement in the education and schooling of their children correlates with greater academic achievement. HB 17-1001 allows employees of Colorado businesses to take up to 18 hours of leave per academic year to attend their children's parent-teacher conferences; special education services; response to interventions for dropout prevention, attendance, truancy, or other disciplinary issues.

House Bill 17-1187 – Change Excess State Revenue's Cap Growth Factor

WFCO wants to ensure there are resources to support Colorado's women and girls in achieving economic self-sufficiency. TABOR, an amendment to Colorado's constitution, creates a complex path for state policymakers to navigate when setting tax and budget priorities. This is a barrier for the state being able to provide programs and services that support Colorado's most vulnerable populations. HB 17-1187 proposes to modernize the current TABOR formula by tying revenue growth to personal income, a much more accurate indicator of the economy and a more reflective measure of state revenue.

House Bill 17-1191 – Demographic Notes for Certain Legislative Bills

This bill would allow for the staff of the legislative council to prepare demographic notes on legislative bills in each regular session of the General Assembly. A demographic note would use available data to outline the potential effects of a piece of legislation on various populations within the state. Populations may be identified by race, gender, disability, age, geography, income, or any other relevant characteristic for which data are available. By seeing disparities in these areas, lawmakers are better equipped to ensure their policies are truly aimed at the Coloradans they are intended to benefit.

House Bill 17-1307 – Family And Medical Leave Insurance Program Wage Replacement

Improving access to paid leave for low-income women in Colorado will increase their opportunity to earn a livable wage. This bill creates the family and medical leave insurance (FAMLI) program to provide partial wage-replacement benefits to an eligible individual who takes leave from work to care for a new child or a family member with a serious health condition or who is unable to work due to the individual's own serious health condition.

Senate Bill 17-118 – Information on Private Occupational Schools

This bill expands the information that private occupational schools (schools) must provide to prospective students before the student enrolls in a program, including program completion rates, post-graduation employment rates, average and median student loan debt, loan repayment rates, and legal barriers to entry into an occupation for which the school provides a training program.

Senate Bill 17-287 – Income Tax Credit for Donation to Endowment Fund

By preserving principal and spending income, endowments allow nonprofits and foundations to support our state's communities over the long-term through direct services and grant making. Endowment funds also help nonprofits and foundations invest their assets prudently to grow in value over time. This legislation proposes a 25% tax credit for individual donations of cash, property, or securities to eligible endowment funds held by a nonprofit, a community foundation, or a community foundation on behalf of a nonprofit. The maximum credit amount is \$25,000. To use the credit, donors would have tax liability and cannot claim another state tax credit for the same donation.

WFCO elects to submit a 501(h) form to declare our activities related to lobbying to ensure that we are within IRS Guidelines.