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**Study Predicts Positive Impact of Minimum-Wage Increase on  
Colorado Women and Families**

*Research by Colorado Women's College at the University of Denver, in collaboration with The Women's Foundation of Colorado, examines broad implications of minimum-wage increase to \$12*

**DENVER** (Sept. 13, 2016) — A minimum-wage increase to \$12 per hour will strengthen Colorado's economy and benefit most minimum-wage earners in the state, according to a new report released today by [Colorado Women's College](#) (CWC) at the University of Denver (DU) in collaboration with [The Women's Foundation of Colorado](#) (WFCO). Colorado voters this fall will consider a proposed amendment to the Colorado Constitution that would increase the state minimum wage.

Underway since early 2016, the nonpartisan study — [The Impact of a \\$12.00 Minimum Wage on Women in Colorado](#) — sought to understand the implications for women, beyond earnings, of a proposed increase of the Colorado minimum wage (from \$8.31 per hour today to \$12 per hour by 2020). The newly formed Colorado Women's College Collaboratory (CWC<sup>C</sup>) funded the study. CWC has transitioned from a degree-granting institution at DU to focus on advancing women through new initiatives, such as convening collaborative research of this kind.

Among key findings are that as a result of a minimum-wage increase, the Colorado gross domestic product will grow by \$400 million, and incomes will increase for 20 percent of households in Colorado.

— more —

The report explores who would be impacted by an increase in the minimum wage, how that increase would affect job growth and the Colorado economy and how a higher minimum wage would impact child care access and affordability. Additional key findings include:

- A \$12-per-hour minimum wage will boost income for approximately 290,000 women.
- Incomes will increase for 200,000 households with children.

“Contrary to other reports, our research shows that the proposed increase to the Colorado minimum wage will increase consumer spending, thereby strengthening the economy and likely driving job growth, not job loss,” says report co-author Jack Strauss, Miller Chair of Applied Economics at the DU Daniels College of Business. His research focuses on applied economic analysis, and he has extensive local experience conducting economic impact studies.

Co-author Jennifer Greenfield, an assistant professor in the DU Graduate School of Social Work, says the research found positive impacts on the social fabric of Colorado communities. “Overall, we predict a net positive effect for Colorado from an increase in the state minimum wage. Specifically, it would increase the income of many working women, lift them out of poverty and put them on a path toward self-sufficiency,” Greenfield says. Her research focuses on health and wealth disparities among women and seeks to identify policy interventions that best support families.

The study also considers the impact of a minimum-wage increase on eligibility for child care, health care, nutrition and other public assistance programs. The report concludes that a very small number of Coloradans may lose benefits if the minimum wage is increased. “In most of those cases, women and their families still come out ahead because the increase in income will be greater than the value of benefits they may lose,” Greenfield explains. The report outlines several policy considerations to mitigate any negative impact of benefit loss on families.

“With women comprising more than half of the state’s minimum-wage workforce and people of color overrepresented among minimum-wage earners, we felt it was important to understand the full range of implications for women and families in Colorado,” says Lauren Y. Casteel, president and CEO of WFCO, which initiated the research with CWC. “We see from this research that an increase in the minimum wage will have a significant positive impact on women and their families and will help address longstanding income inequality for women and people of color in Colorado.”

Linda Olson, CWC interim dean, adds that providing such insightful research into one of society's most pressing problems represents a key component in the University's IMPACT 2025 strategic plan. "This CWC<sup>C</sup> research initiative is a partnership with The Women's Foundation of Colorado, and it engaged research faculty from the Daniels College of Business and the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver. It demonstrates the power and potential of collaboration to support the advancement of women."

In addition to funding by CWC, the research project had support from the University of Denver Faculty Senate Faculty Research Fund.

The full report is available online at [www.wfco.org/research](http://www.wfco.org/research) and [www.womenscollege.du.edu](http://www.womenscollege.du.edu).

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#### **About The Women's Foundation of Colorado**

As the only community foundation in Colorado focused on women and girls, The Women's Foundation of Colorado engages in research, public policy advocacy, and strategic grantmaking to improve educational and employment opportunities to support girls and women on the path to economic self-sufficiency. As a research partner, WFCO pursues nonpartisan answers to key questions about opportunities and challenges for women and girls to identify strategies and guide action to improve economic outcomes for women and families through statewide policy and community grantmaking partnerships. Learn more at [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org).

#### **About the Colorado Women's College**

The vision of Colorado Women's College (CWC) at the University of Denver is to be a global leader in advancing women in the 21st century through transformative education, leadership development, public-good work, and research. Learn more at [www.womenscollege.du.edu](http://www.womenscollege.du.edu).