

# RECOMMENDATIONS



ADVANCING WOMEN  
POWERING THE ECONOMY

## 1. COMMIT TO COLLECTING, PUBLISHING, AND USING BETTER DATA.

- Prioritize developing quantitative and qualitative data related to Vermonters whose experiences are often obscured by aggregated information, among them: people of color, people living with disabilities, those who identify as LGBTQIA.
- Require state training and apprenticeship data to be disaggregated by gender, race, training program and anticipated wage post-training.
- Modify Vermont incorporation forms and software to indicate whether a business is woman- or minority-owned.
- Track and report on the number of state contracts awarded to women- and minority-owned businesses.

## 2. ENACT PAID FAMILY LEAVE AND BOOST CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES.

- Support parents in staying at work, as most Vermont families cannot afford to have a parent out of the workforce.

## 3. VALUE ALL WORK BY HONORING IT WITH FULL-TIME WAGES THAT SUPPORT BASIC NEEDS.

- Support livable wages for child care workers and in Vermont's burgeoning service economy, including workers who earn tipped wages.

## 4. RECOGNIZE AND REDUCE THE IMPACT OF BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION.

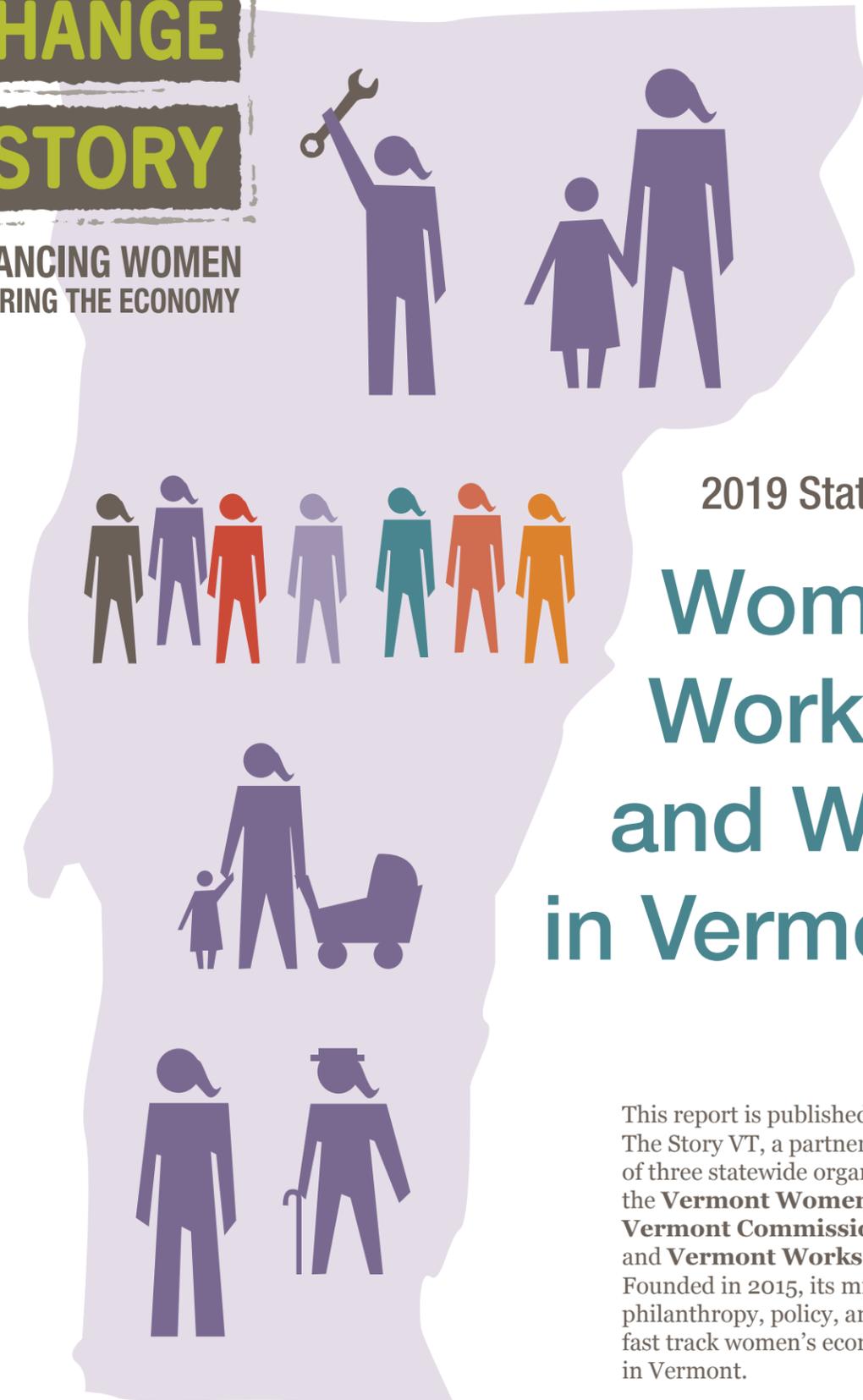
- Learn more about your own implicit biases, as well as those that are systemic.
- Adopt policies and practices that reduce the impact of bias in recruitment, hiring, promotions, and salary negotiations.
- Conduct regular compensation reviews to ensure pay equity for all employees.

## 5. INCREASE WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH & TRADES CAREERS.

- Support programs that expose young women and men to a broad range of careers.
- Set goals for increasing women's presence in non-traditional state-funded training programs, and prioritize diversity in high school career and technical education programs and state colleges.
- Incentivize workforce diversity in state contracts and economic development awards.
- Ensure the safety of women in settings where they are a minority of workers.



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2019 Status Report:

# Women, Work, and Wages in Vermont

This report is published by Change The Story VT, a partnership initiative of three statewide organizations: the **Vermont Women's Fund**, **Vermont Commission on Women**, and **Vermont Works for Women**. Founded in 2015, its mission is to align philanthropy, policy, and programs to fast track women's economic well-being in Vermont.



## AMONG OUR FINDINGS:

### **Women—especially women of color and women living with disabilities—are a disproportionate share of Vermonters who live in poverty.**

- The poverty rate for male single householders without children is 3.5%; for women, the rate is nearly four times that at 11.4%. When you add minor children to the household, families led by single men have a poverty rate of 16.0%; families led by single women are more than twice as likely to live in poverty at 36.7%.
- The poverty rates for women of color are higher than the rate for white women (12.3%). The poverty rate for Hispanic/Latinx women is 17.6%; for Asian women, 14.3%, and for Black women, 26.9%.
- 20.1% of women with a disability live in poverty, more than twice the poverty rate for women without a disability (8.4%).

### **While Vermont women work at a rate that is higher than the national average, full-time work doesn't always pay the bills.**

- Nearly 4 out of 10 women who work full-time do not earn enough to meet basic living expenses for a single individual, as defined by Vermont's Joint Fiscal Office.
- Women are a disproportionate share of Vermonters who make less than \$11 an hour. The median age of women earning under \$11 an hour is 38 years old and 28% have earned college credits or have a college degree.
- The poverty rate for tipped workers—81% of whom are female—is 13.1%, six points higher than the overall poverty rate for employed women.

### **The gender wage gap persists at 16 cents for every dollar earned by men—and is especially pronounced for women of color and women living with disabilities.**

- A woman must earn at least some college credits to come close to matching the income of a man without a high school diploma.
- Women living with disabilities who work full-time earn nearly 13% less than women without disabilities and 23% less than men with disabilities. In contrast, full-time earnings between men with and without disabilities differ by less than 4%.
- The wage gap between white men and women in the United States is 22%. The rate is 16 points higher (38%) for Black and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander women, 42% for Native American women, and 46% for Hispanic/Latinx women. While wage gap data by race in Vermont may not exactly mirror national statistics, they are very likely to follow the general pattern.

### **Sixty percent of the wage gap is linked to two factors: occupational segregation and time in and out of the labor force.**

- Nearly half of the occupations in which women's median annual salaries top \$35,000 (the amount an individual must earn to meet basic needs, as defined by the VT Joint Fiscal Office) are those in which women are a tiny fraction of the workforce.
- Women are at least four times more likely than men to reduce their hours or leave the workforce for a period of time to care for children or aging family members. If a 35 year-old woman earning \$41,000 leaves her job until her newborn goes to kindergarten, she could lose an estimated \$433,000 in wages, lost raises, and retirement contributions.

### **40% of the wage gap is attributed to gender bias, discrimination, persistent gender norms, and the economic impact of experiences that disproportionately affect women: sexual harassment and intimate partner violence.**

- Differences in pay start early: A national study of 10,000 families found that on average boys earned twice as much allowance from their families for doing weekly chores (\$13.80) than girls did (\$6.71).
- Participants in a widely cited national study were asked to assess equally qualified candidates whose status as either mothers or women without children was implied somewhere on a resume or cover letter. Evaluators were 8.2 times more likely to recommend women without children for promotion.
- Nationally, the estimated lifetime cost to someone who has experienced intimate partner violence is \$103,767.

### **Women carry more student loan debt and pay higher costs or taxes on basic consumer products.**

- Women carry almost two-thirds of outstanding student debt in the United States—totaling nearly \$929 billion. Black women carry the highest level of college debt overall—\$8,700 more than white women and nearly \$18,000 more than Asian women.
- In 2015, when NYC officials compared 800 products from over 90 brands with clear male or female brands, they found that "women's" products cost 7 percent more than similar products for men.

### **The cumulative impact of women's lower earnings over a lifetime of work is significant—for women and for Vermont.**

- Women over 65 have a median annual income of \$19,566—about \$11,000 less than men. As a result, 44% of Vermont's senior women do not have enough income to meet basic expenses.
- Researchers estimate that if women earned wages equal to that of men who are comparable (in terms of age education, and number of work hours), women's higher earnings would add an additional \$1.2 billion to the state economy.

