



Because
She Matters
to you, here's
what you can do.

SHE MATTERS

Top Ten Issues

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INPUT AT THE
2012 IOWA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

1.

INCREASED NUMBER OF IOWA WOMEN ARE EMPLOYED IN STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATHEMATICS) CAREERS

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Link public and private STEM initiatives throughout Iowa
- Encourage incentives for STEM businesses to hire women
- Advocate for a statewide curriculum for girls in STEM
- Support school to workforce transition programs for STEM careers

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Assist in building public awareness of STEM and state efforts
- Promote training and hiring female teachers in STEM subjects
- Encourage females in STEM workplaces to mentor other women
- Endorse exploration of STEM careers at young ages (elementary school) and include hands-on experiences
- Learn what other states and communities are doing to promote STEM to girls and align efforts
- Support school-business partnership programs that provide girls with exposure to STEM workplaces and create internship opportunities

RESOURCES

- Iowa Governor's STEM Initiative: www.iowastem.gov
- Iowa Math and Science Education Partnership: www.iowastem.gov/imsep
- Corridor STEM Initiative: www.corridorstem.org
- AAUW Embraces STEM: www.aauw.org/stem
- Girl Scouts of America, Girls In STEM: www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/science

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Learn about why STEM is important for girls and women
- Find ways to include science and/or mathematics in daily interactions with children
- Expose young people to science centers, planetariums, zoos, and parks (rather than movie theaters and shopping malls)
- Promote STEM through faith, community, and gender-specific organizations in your community

2.

ALL IOWA WOMEN AND GIRLS HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Increase availability of health-care buying pools
- Increase support of services in physician shortage areas of the state (mobile clinics, nontraditional sites)
- Create an official state website with easy-to-understand health care and access information
- Create nurse navigator and health care coaching programs for public health services
- Develop a tax incentive program for volunteer procedures by medical professionals

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Identify local gaps in insurance and health care coverage and investigate causes
- Create local maps and information about providers in different communities
- Provide health insurance information to students before graduation to help them understand the process and importance of insurance coverage
- Create a campaign to educate public about the importance of having health care coverage and use of medical services (disease prevention, health management)

RESOURCES

- U.S. Department of Human Services Office on Women's Health: www.womenshealth.gov
- National Institutes of Health, Health Information: www.health.nih.gov
- Free Clinics of Iowa: www.freeclinicsofiowa.org
- Healthy and Well Kids in Iowa (hawk-i) Program: www.hawk-i.org
- Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association: www.ianepca.com
- Senior Health Insurance Information Program: www.shiip.state.ia.us

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Conduct community education sessions about understanding health coverage
- Organize free school physicals and other health services at local schools
- Volunteer to teach at a SHIIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program) site
- Organize educational workshops for women and girls around health concerns and prevention
- Develop community awareness around local free clinics

3.

FEMALES AND MALES ARE PAID EQUALLY FOR EQUAL WORK

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Enforce pay equity at the state level
- Design a regulatory system to oversee salary standards and implement penalties for noncompliance
- Provide incentives for businesses proving pay equity and promoting and compensating women at high levels
- State agency development of business policies including flexible hours, family leave, and other women-friendly practices

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Create “Best Places for Women to Work in Iowa” award
- Research and publish best practices of companies that practice pay equity
- Provide educational seminars targeting male leaders about women’s pay disparity
- Provide salary negotiation and lifestyle planning education in high schools and colleges

RESOURCES

- AAUW (Pay Equity Resource List): www.aauwiowa.org
- Iowa State University Smart Start Workshops: www.isupjcenter.org/assistance/smartstart
- The Wage Project: www.wageproject.org
- National Women’s Law Center, Equal Pay Initiative: www.nwlc.org/fairpay

HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Conduct seminars to teach women how to negotiate for higher salaries and workplace flexibility
- Provide learning opportunities for school-age children to understand gender pay equity
- Create open communication about salaries and expectations at individual businesses
- Create local recognition programs for “equity-conscious businesses” including a directory, website, and site designation

4.

ALL IOWA WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES LIVE ABOVE THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Develop and implement policies that address women-specific barriers to employment and financial success and to avoid the “cliff effect” (affordable childcare, flexible schedules, benefits, etc.)
- Provide sufficient public funding for child care for women while they are job searching, interviewing, or taking classes
- Increase access to workforce support programs, especially in rural areas
- Ensure access to high-paying jobs for women with diverse levels of education

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Open community centers to women in need of services related to financial security
- Build community support networks to assist struggling families
- Develop mentoring or “family adoption” programs for persons in poverty with those that have improved their financial status
- Build local knowledge through group poverty simulations during civic, faith, and cultural group meetings

RESOURCES

- Iowa Policy Project, Discovering “Cliffs” in Iowa: www.iowapolicyproject.org/IowaCliffs.html
- Child and Family Policy Center, Poverty Reduction and Asset Building: www.cfpciowa.org
- Northwest Area Foundation, Case Studies and Best Practices: www.nwaf.org/content/programs
- Iowa Association of Community Action Agencies: www.iowacommunityaction.com

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Encourage employers to offer affordable on-site child care for employees
- Partner with faith, corporate, or civic groups for job coaching programs
- Offer assistance to women and families in need
- Make a charitable contribution to an organization serving women and girls in poverty

5.

IOWA WOMEN DO NOT EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Design and implement a standard curriculum for schools related to healthy and positive relationships (at all age levels)
- Provide targeted monitoring for perpetrators of sexual violence
- Create standards for media representation of women
- Support capacity of mental health professionals, neighborhood watch programs, and “safe zones” throughout the state

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Train professionals and community members in techniques to identify sexual violence
- Host community support groups for victims of sexual violence
- Implement programs that use positive role models and support healthy relationships
- Create a local coalition of sexual assault advocates to provide expertise and leadership

RESOURCES

- Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault: www.iowacasa.org
- Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.icadv.org
- Latinas Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer (LUNA): www.lunaiowa.org
- Mid Iowa Sexual Assault Response Team (SART): www.midiowasart.webs.com

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Provide training for boys and young men on healthy relationships and penalties for sexual aggression and/or violence
- Create opportunities for open conversations about risk and response to sexual violence
- Develop men's network focused on eliminating sexual and domestic violence
- Provide neighborhood and community education on safe bystander intervention

6.

MORE IOWA ELECTED AND APPOINTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN IOWA ARE WOMEN

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Elect a female Governor and female representatives to Congress
- Increase the representation of women in the state legislature and in statewide, county, and municipal elected offices
- Appoint women to fill 50% of the positions on Iowa's municipal, county, and state boards and commissions
- Increase the representation of female students on high school and college governing bodies

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Encourage all eligible Iowans to vote
- Encourage a diversity of women (e.g., by age, race and ethnicity, political party) to participate in political campaigns
- Recruit and train women on how to become a candidate and run a campaign for public office
- Recruit and train women on how to be appointed to state, county, and municipal boards and commissions
- Provide mentoring experiences for women interested in public service
- Educate women on how to balance public office with professional and personal life
- Encourage and support female participation in all aspects of civic/public decision-making

RESOURCES

- 50-50 in 2020: www.50-50in2020.org
- Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, Iowa State University: www.las.iastate.edu/cattcenter
- Democratic Activist Women's Network of Iowa: www.dawnslist.org
- League of Women Voters of Iowa: www.lwvia.org
- Iowa Chapter of the American Association of University Women, Gender Equity: www.aauwiowa.org
- Iowa Federation of Republican Women: www.iowafrw.org

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Register and encourage women to vote in local, county, state, and federal elections
- Identify and ask women to run as candidates for local, county, state, and federal elected office
- Identify and ask women to seek appointment to municipal, county, and state boards and commissions
- Contribute resources — time and money — to women political candidates
- Mentor girls and young women to be involved in leadership and decision-making roles

7.

50% OR MORE IOWA BUSINESSES ARE OWNED BY WOMEN

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Increase tax incentives for women business owners
- Create an entrepreneur center/incubator for women and align efforts among organizations serving or awarding women-owned businesses
- Make insurance, employee benefits, free legal guidance, and loans available and affordable for women-owned small businesses
- Encourage Iowa Economic Development Authority to assist in removing barriers and create “seed fund” or low-interest loans for women to start businesses

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Study and share case studies from top states for women-owned businesses
- Publish directories of, and create special methods to identify and publicize women-owned businesses and their locations
- Match business professional with female business owners for coaching and guidance
- Train retired women business owners to become coaches and mentors

RESOURCES

- U.S. Small Business Administration: www.sba.gov
- Women’s Business Center at ISED: www.isediowa.org/iowa_womens_enterprise_center.asp
- Iowa Economic Development Authority: www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com
- Web-based resources and education for small business owners: MyEntre.net
- Targeted Small Business Program: www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/business/tsb.aspx

HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Hold seminars for women on starting a business
- Teach entrepreneurship to children and young adults
- Promote and patronize businesses that are women-owned
- Start or support a local “Women’s Chamber of Commerce” or network for women-owned businesses

8.

ALL IOWA WOMEN HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Create and maintain a state-wide 24-hour “homeless hotline” to provide emergency assistance
- Create emergency funding pool and resource center to keep women and families in their home
- Provide tax incentives to purchase foreclosed homes or buildings and convert to group homes or shelters
- Minimize housing costs through government subsidies, tax breaks, or social housing projects

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Learn successful practices and programs from other states
- Hold focus groups or interview homeless to learn what needs are
- Train school staff to identify and refer children who are potentially or currently homeless
- Encourage community organizations to provide assistance to homeless women and families
- Create a shelter to provide room and board in return for work

RESOURCES

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: www.hud.gov
- SAMSHA Homeless Resource Center: www.homeless.samhsa.gov/default.aspx
- Iowa Finance Authority Council on Homelessness: www.iowafinanceauthority.gov/en/for_homeless_providers_housing_organizations/iowa_council_on_homelessness

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Lead a collection of supplies, food, and other assistance for homeless families
- Work or volunteer at a shelter
- Provide free legal, medical, education, or counseling services
- Treat homeless individuals in your community with respect and dignity (teach your children to do the same)

9.

IOWA'S AGING WOMEN ARE HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Support development of common rating system for elder services and nursing homes
- Support implementation of direct care worker credentialing system and pay scales
- Ensure systems for portable prescription coverage, transportation services, mobile medical clinics, help hotlines, and other practices to ensure access
- Create a statewide program that encourages incentives for retired persons to become “senior companions” to make daily visits, help with errands, etc.

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Connect schools and senior care facilities to provide companionship, education, and volunteer opportunities
- Provide classes and education at senior centers and nursing homes
- Hold community cooking events to prepare and freeze individual servings and deliver to home-based seniors
- Open “boys and girls” clubs and group homes for elderly
- Implement effective senior food programs (home delivery, community sites)

RESOURCES

- Area Agencies on Aging: www.aging.iowa.gov/aaa/index.html
- Iowa Department on Aging: www.aging.iowa.gov
- AARP Iowa: www.aarp.org/states.ia
- Senior Corps: www.seniorcorps.gov

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Deliver cooking or exercise classes for seniors teaching nutrition and health
- Volunteer to be substitute decision maker (representative payee, power of attorney for medical and financial)
- Create a pool of available drivers to accompany seniors to doctor appointments and events
- Organize an inter-generational lunch group

10.

IOWA GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE PREVENTED OR DIVERTED FROM INCARCERATION

GOALS (POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION)

- Review and revise mandatory sentencing laws
- Develop diversion or public service work programs for women as alternative to prison
- Provide government jobs for immediate employment upon release from incarceration
- Develop statewide early identification system of girls and women at risk to become offenders
- Support innovations shown to cut re-offense rates such as nurseries in prisons

ACTIONS (EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS)

- Support after-school and out-of-school programming for youth to prevent delinquency, substance abuse, high school dropout
- Develop materials for mental health and medical providers to inform on issues related to women at risk for criminal behavior
- Create community-based “navigators” to help prepare women for, and connect women with resources following release
- Develop community awareness programs to identify girls exhibiting early warning signs (risky behaviors, school failure)

RESOURCES

- Iowa Department of Corrections: www.doc.state.ia.us
- Office of the Iowa Attorney General: www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov
- Eyerly Ball Jail Diversion Program: www.eyerlyball.org/other-programs/jail-diversion
- Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning: www.humanrights.iowa.gov/cjpp
- SAMHSA, Trauma and Justice Program: www.samhsa.gov/traumajustice

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Volunteer to provide training/mentoring for at-risk women and girls
- Create a community support system for children and families of incarcerated women
- Talk to female offenders to learn what may have helped them avoid incarceration
- Invite female offenders into schools and youth programs to speak about experience
- Implement community awareness and neighborhood-based programs to identify potential offenders and provide support

IOWA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROJECT MEMBERSHIP

IWLC (Iowa Women's Leadership Conference)

Chrysalis

NEXUS, Executive Women's Alliance

Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, Iowa State University

Iowa Department of Human Rights

Iowa Women's Foundation

Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

Iowa Network for Women in Higher Education

American Association of University Women Iowa

Women's Connection, Quad Cities and Muscatine

Women Aware, Sioux City

The Way Up Conference

Business and Professional Women/Iowa

Women's Leadership Network, Dubuque

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