

Women's Bureau

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WOMEN'S BUREAU

Advocating for working women

since 1920

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Dear Women's Bureau community,

It's been my honor to serve as Director of the Women's Bureau under President Biden and Acting Secretary Su. While my last day in this role is approaching, I know the positive change we've driven together will be long-lasting.

Looking back at the past four years, I am so proud of everything we've accomplished together.

We built pathways for women to enter high-paying, male-dominated fields and advocated for strategies to retain them.

We awarded nearly \$17.8 million in [Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations \(WANTO\)](#) funds to 26 community-based organizations working to prepare women for apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs or train them for nontraditional occupations. Our [2024 WANTO class](#) – nine organizations splitting \$6 million – was the largest in history. As a result of our recent efforts to make WANTO even more impactful and inclusive, 87% of the women served since Fiscal Year 2020 have earned a credential or industry license, 92% achieved a measurable skills gain and 69% are from a historically underserved community.

2024 Women in Apprenticeship & Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant awardees:

Arkansas Center for Data Sciences
Catalyst Connection
Chicago Women in Trades
Dev Mission
Fresh Start Women's Foundation
Maryland Center for Construction Education & Innovation

Southern Nevada Building Trades Union
Vermont Works for Women, Inc.
Veterans Enterprise Training & Services Group, Inc.



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We ensured that gender and racial equity were centered in the job creation that resulted from the Biden-Harris administration's federal investments. Our [Tradeswomen Building Infrastructure](#) and [Leveraging Infrastructure Networks for Equity](#) grants drove local efforts to train, hire and retain women on federally funded infrastructure, advanced manufacturing and clean energy

projects. Through the [Good Jobs Initiative](#), we provided technical assistance across and outside the federal government on best practices for recruiting and retaining women, including funding [wraparound supportive services](#) and respectful workplace trainings. Similarly, our publication “[Tools for Building an Equitable Infrastructure Workforce](#)” has helped employers, contractors, unions and local governments to make the intentional choice to build a diverse workforce.

We advocated for higher wages and better working conditions for care workers and women working other low-paid, female-dominated fields.

- We supported efforts to raise wages and improve working conditions for wage earners in fields like domestic labor, healthcare and personal care, who are disproportionately women. This included publishing [sample employment agreements for domestic workers](#), available in eight languages.



- Our research demonstrated the cost to the U.S. economy of [job segregation](#) and of [underinvestment in care infrastructure](#); we also [estimated the economic contribution of the childcare sector](#).

We expanded the understanding of sexual harassment by elevating [gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work](#) as a top issue.

- We helped draft the first-ever [U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#), hosted the Department of Labor’s [first summit on gender-based violence and harassment](#) (GBVH) in the world of work, and led a [Day of Action to Promote Safety and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Trucking Industry](#). We broke new ground in 2023 when we dedicated our [Fostering Rights, Access and Equity \(FARE\) grant](#) to funding organizations that assist women workers in addressing and preventing GBVH – the first time the Labor Department has invested in this issue.

We made a strong case for investing in care infrastructure.

- Our seminal [National Database of Childcare Prices](#) has been cited hundreds of times in the media and has proven to be a critical resource for understanding the dimensions of the childcare crisis. The database allows researchers and policymakers to combine county-level childcare price data with local maternal employment and economic indicators, as well as compare prices across counties. Our analysis of the data shows that [childcare prices are untenable for many families in the U.S.](#) and that greater federal investments in care infrastructure are badly needed.

The median price of center-based care for one infant in very large counties was

\$15,600 in 2022, more than the national median cost of a year of rent (\$15,216).

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- Our research, technical assistance and grantmaking has driven progress on paid leave in states and at the federal level. After we provided technical assistance to five states using the Labor Department’s [Worker PLUS microsimulation model](#), two states passed new paid family and medical leave programs. Our [paid leave webpage](#) contains a wealth of information, including a [map of state-level paid leave programs](#) available in English and Spanish. This June, we hosted the Paid Leave: Equity in Implementation conference, which convened state paid leave administrators, advocates, researchers and the federal government to discuss equitable implementation practices. We also funded [research by the Urban Institute](#) that demonstrated that a national paid leave program would reduce poverty and increase equity.
- Research products such as “[The Cost of Doing Nothing](#)” and “[Lifetime Employment-Related Costs to Women of Providing Family Care](#)” quantified the price we pay as a country for underinvesting in our care infrastructure and forcing families, mostly women, to take on significant unpaid care work.

We remained a go-to source for research on the gender pay and wealth gap.

- Policymakers turned to our research to quantify the gaps in pay and wealth between women and men and come up with strategies for closing them. Our [data on the dimensions of the pay gap](#) disaggregated by race and ethnicity, occupation and other factors is unmatched. Our publications have included a [brief on salary history bans](#), a [map of state-level equal pay and pay transparency protections](#), and [research on gaps](#) between older workers.

We released data, fact sheets and issue briefs related to subgroups of women including mothers; grandmothers and other older women; workers who are pregnant, give birth or pump breastmilk at work; and workers who are experiencing menstruation and menopause, which have been used by policymakers and employers to guide policy considerations and by workers to learn about their rights.

We maintained and regularly updated our unique data repository, which is used by thousands of people every month.

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Taking stock of all this work, I am prouder than ever of the Women’s Bureau team. I’ve often talked about our “superpowers” of research, grantmaking, and education and outreach, which are unmatched across the federal government. There is no other organization like the Women’s Bureau, and no team has this unique mix of quantitative researchers, issue experts, regional representatives and support staff.

Many things will be uncertain going forward, but I know I can count on each and every one of you to advocate for the critical work of this agency. It’s been my honor to work with you all.

Wendy



Women's Bureau

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