



## Office on the Economic Status of Women

**TO:** OESW Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women (OESW)

**DATE:** January 22, 2016

**RE:** **Overview of 2015 OESW Accomplishments and Activities**

### 2015 OESW Accomplishments

- Developed 14 OESW fact sheets and reports:
  - Summary of the Women’s Economic Security Act (WESA)
  - Two fact sheets on status of WESA implementation
  - Older Women and Poverty
  - Older Women and the Basic Cost of Living
  - Summary of 2015 Legislative Session
  - Report on 2015 OESW Greater Minnesota Listening Sessions
  - Fact Sheet Series on Women in Minnesota’s Elected Offices
    - Overview
    - Selected Offices: Congress, State Constitutional Office, County Boards, Legislature, Mayors
    - Women in the Minnesota Legislature
    - Profile of Women Legislators
    - Women Legislators by Party
    - Gender of Minnesota Legislators by Party
    - Women on County Boards
- Established OESW Facebook Page and Twitter Account. Maintain regular postings on both.
- Lead organizer and planner of the 2015 Women’s Economic Security Summit. Two hundred forty-eight people attended the Summit, including 24 legislators. One of the highlights of the Summit was a session on “Voices of Women of Color,” in which women from Minnesota’s Black, Latina, Liberian, Somali, and Hmong communities discussed the contributions their communities make to the state’s culture and economy and the challenges they face.
- Held eight OESW Greater Minnesota listening sessions on women’s economic issues—in Cloquet, International Falls, Thief River Falls, Bemidji, Brainerd, Marshall, Austin, and Rochester. Eighty-six people participated: individual citizens, representatives from 51 different organizations (private, nonprofit, education, and government sectors), and 10 state legislators.
- Co-sponsored “Legislation Session Wrap-Up: Gender Equity Style,” along with the Minnesota Women’s Consortium.

- Co-sponsored “Legislative Research: Gender Equity Style,” along with the Minnesota Women’s Consortium.
- Re-started the historical tradition of OESW newsletters. The original Council on the Economic Status of Women began publishing newsletters the year the Council was established, in 1976. CESW published 264 newsletters, but none had been published since 2003. In April 2015, OESW published its first, and has now published a total of six. Topics have been
  - Recap of the 2015 Women’s Economic Security Summit and overview of bills OESW is following in the 2015 session
  - Economic Security of Minnesota’s Older Women
  - 2015 Legislative Session Summary
  - Women in Minnesota’s Elected Offices
  - Status of Implementation of WESA
  - Women’s Voices from Greater Minnesota

### **Assistance to Legislators**

OESW provided research and briefing papers for legislators on 44 different occasions. Topics included

- Transportation needs of women and families.
- Women’s economic security.
- Barriers to women in non-traditional occupations.
- OESW legislative priorities.
- WESA implementation.
- Transportation needs of women in Greater Minnesota.
- Economic impact of cooperative divorce on women and review of other types of alternative dispute resolution for divorce.
- OESW.
- Minimum wage and women.
- Tipped wages and women.
- Women in state legislatures, and why women are underrepresented in state legislatures.
- Impact of family-friendly workplace policies on women’s labor force participation.
- Displaced homemakers re-entering the workforce.
- The need for affordable child care in Greater Minnesota.
- Older women’s economic security.
- Local government pre-emption for paid leave and minimum wage.
- History of policies for responsible parenthood.
- Research on initiatives similar to WESA in other states and at the federal level.
- Economic security of single mothers.
- Child support.
- Economic disparities for Minnesota’s women of color.

## **Other OESW Activities**

- Served on two committees (Contracting Practices and Employment) of the Governor's State Government Diversity & Inclusion Council
- Advised the MN Dept. of Human Resources on its Equal Pay Certificate program and reviewed the Department's WESA-required 2016 report to the Legislature on this program.
- Monitored the work of the Child Support Work Group and provided comments on the impact of various proposals on the economic security of women who are custodial parents.
- Provided research support for the inclusion of an iconic Minnesota working woman figure on the Capitol grounds' Workers' Memorial Wall.
- Serve on MnDOT's Advisory Team on Transportation Needs.
- Helped the USDOL Women's Bureau arrange a Minnesota forum for the U.S. Secretary of Labor on paid family leave and other family-friendly workplace issues.
- Arranged for legislators to attend the National Guard's Women's Equality Day event at Camp Ripley.
- Maintain and update table on calculating COLA for child support and spousal maintenance. Answer related questions from public.

## **OESW Presentations**

Gave 13 presentations: MDHR Human Rights Symposium, Cretin-Derham Hall Justice Week, Hamline, SPNN, Women's Consortium "Girls Rock," Black Women's Business Alliance, Minnesota Women Lawyers, WomenVenture, 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Law Clerks, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Topics included: WESA, Economic Issues for Women of Color, WESA, Women's Economic Issues, OESW, Pay Equity, Women's Workplace Issues, and Equity in Transportation.