



Office on the Economic Status of Women

Quarterly Newsletter
June 2024



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Photo by Andrew VonBank

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR!

Summer has finally arrived following a very busy session. I started as the Director of the Office on the Economic Status of Women back in November and was quickly flung into my first Minnesota State Legislative Session. Though I'm no stranger to local government, Minnesota has a uniquely large number of bills introduced each year. This past session, I tracked the progress of all bills that related to the economic status of women, whether they had to do with health insurance, childcare accessibility, labor discrimination, and much more.

This session I had my eye on over 300 bills, 137 of which had at least one hearing, and many of which had several (stay tuned for our 2024 Legislative Summary!). Though the session was hectic as always, it also provided me with wonderful opportunities to meet so many new people both within the Capitol and beyond.

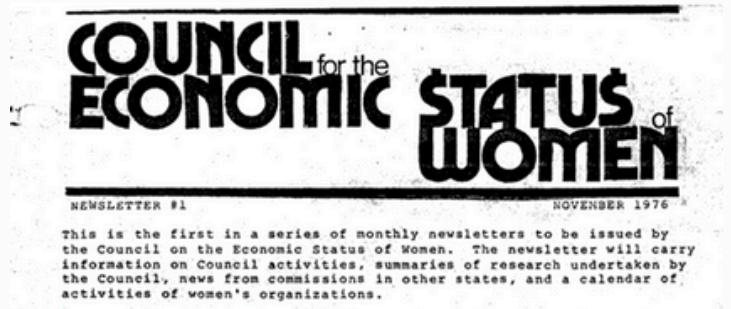
One of my most immediate goals upon the revival of this office was to resume the newsletter, which served for years as an important resource regarding women's economic matters for legislators, staff, academics, advocates, and the public. In this issue, you'll find a refresher course on the purpose of the OESW, some updates to how we operate, a little bit about us, and a legislative summary of relevant laws passed since the Office last operated in 2017.

If you ever have questions, concerns, or just want to grab a cup of coffee, reach out to me at heather.heyer@oesw.mn.gov!

Enjoy the summer sunshine!
Heather J. Heyer

THE RETURN OF THE NEWSLETTER

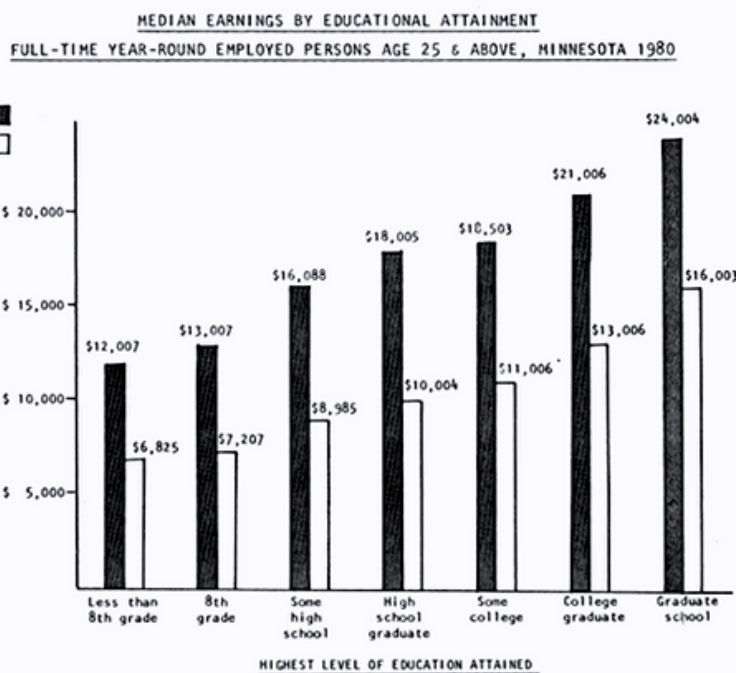
Nearly all the OESW newsletters published since 1976 can be read thanks to the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library's vast archives. The OESW newsletters explored a variety of topics, from local women's sports wins to data on social security benefits. One thing remains consistent throughout the decades, however: women's economic inequality. Whether its 1984 or 2024, the gender wage gap has been difficult to overcome.



Council on the Economic Status of Women,
November 1976 Newsletter

And it's not just the wage gap that has persisted. Many past newsletters focused on the same issues that women are facing today, like high childcare costs and workplace harassment. These newsletters used data from across the state to illustrate the reality and consequences of women's economic inequality on all Minnesotans.

This newsletter will pick up where past newsletters left off, continuing to track, document and inform the Minnesota Legislature and greater community on issues relating to women's economic prosperity. You might also find a few fun things thrown in here and there, like spotlights on local organizations, news recaps, and even a book recommendation or two.



Council on the Economic Status of Women, February 1984 Newsletter

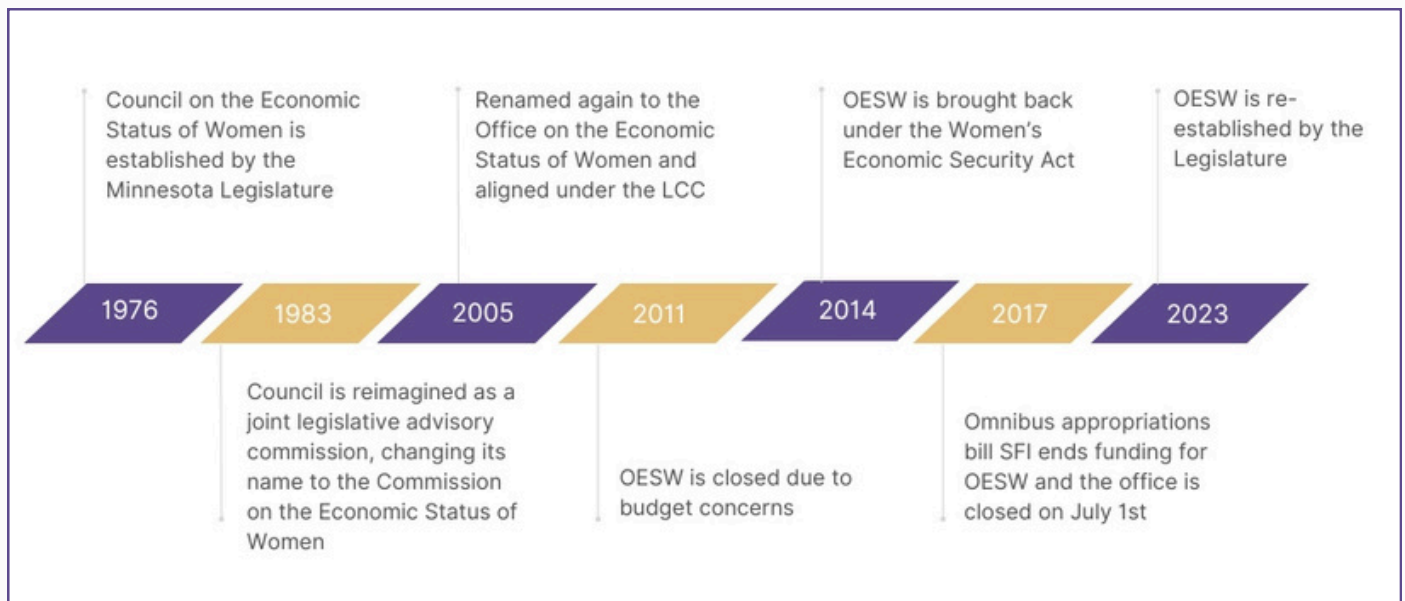
WHAT IS THE OESW, ANYWAY?

The **Office on the Economic Status of Women** is a nonpartisan office that advises the legislature and provides information and statistics on women in Minnesota. It gathers information on population characteristics, educational attainment and enrollments, marital and parental status, household characteristics, labor force status and employment characteristic, and basic information on women's legal and economic rights.

The OESW Advisory Committee consist of two members of the House and two members of the Senate. Their role is to advise the OESW on key issues. Our current Advisory Committee members are **Representative Kaohly Vang Her**, **Representative Kristin Robbins**, **Senator Sandra Pappas**, and **Senator Julia Coleman**.

HISTORY OF THE OESW

The Office on the Economic Status of Women (OESW) was originally known as the **Council on the Economic Status of Women**, created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1976. It was charged to "study all matters relating to the economic status of women in Minnesota, including matters of credit, family support and inheritance laws relating to the economic security of the homemaker, educational opportunities, career counseling, contributions of women to Minnesota's per capita and family income and state revenues, job and promotion opportunities, and laws and business practices constituting barriers to the full participation of women in the economy," and **studying the "adequacy of programs, services and facilities relating to families in Minnesota..."** The Council replaced the previous Women's Division and Women's Advisory Committee within the Minnesota Human Rights Department.



A NEW LOOK

For the most recent iteration of the Office on the Economic Status of Women, we once again looked to the past for our branding and symbolism. Our new logo features purple and yellow, drawing inspiration from the women's suffrage movement.

According to the National Women's Party, purple is the color of loyalty, constancy to purpose, and steadfastness to a cause. White symbolized the pure quality of their goal, and gold, "the color of light and life, is as the torch that guides our purpose, pure and unswerving."



The Cover for the program booklet for the 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession in Washington DC. From Printed Ephemera: Three Centuries of Broadside and Other Printed Ephemera online presentation.

WHO ARE WE?

HEATHER J. HEYER, DIRECTOR

I'm a double Gopher and attended the University of Minnesota twice, first for my BA in Political Science, and later when I returned to the Humphrey School of Public Affairs for my Masters in Public Policy. I've been working in local government for the past 7 years. Most recently, I was a management analyst for the City of Rochester, where I led the city's redistricting process following the 2020 Census. I was also the Interim Director of Elections for the City and County of Denver, Colorado, where I led efforts to increase accessibility, and to reduce barriers for citizens to make their voice heard in the election process. I was also the Chair for the statewide elections data subcommittee for the County Clerks Association, where I helped all 64 counties use data and evidence to develop policies and procedures related to the election process. I'm passionate about connecting residents with government, and using qualitative and quantitative data to drive policy change! I currently live in Lakeville, Minnesota with my husband, two small children, and two big dogs. I'm a die-hard baseball fan (go Twins!), usually have my nose in a book (or three), and am training for my first marathon this fall.



KATE ALPINER GEDDES, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



I'm a current Masters of Human Rights student at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, concentrating on women and children's rights. Though I originally grew up in Phoenix, I also spent a few years in Colorado, where I got my Bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Before pursuing a masters degree, I spent several years as an English teacher. I taught English as a Second Language in Gunsan, South Korea for several months, before returning to the States to work as a 6th Grade English Teacher in Chicago.

Since moving to Minnesota and attending UMN, I've been working as the Research Assistant at the Center on Women Gender and Public Policy and will be one of the co-chairs for the Gender, Sexuality and Engagement Committee next academic year. In my free time I enjoy working out, gymnastics, and playing video games, and I have a very dramatic and talkative cat named Calliope. I'm so thrilled to be working for the Office on the Economic Status of Women, and am looking forward to exploring more of Minnesota this summer!

SINCE WE'VE BEEN GONE

A variety of legislation relevant to women's economic status has been passed since we last operated in 2017. Click the underlined bill number for more information.

2017-2018

[SF2554](#) | [HF2967](#): Identifying connections between pornography and sex trafficking
Expanded the information on human trafficking collected by the Department of Public Safety to include arrest, prosecution, and conviction data for crimes involving minors and pornography.

[HF3689](#) | [SF2662](#): Birth defect information systems change
Expanded system to include birth defects that develop during pregnancy and result in reportable fetal death.

[SF2863](#) | [HF3017](#): Established procedure for sexual assault examination kits.
Set procedures and requirements for law enforcement handling of sexual assault examination kits.

[SF3367](#) | [HF3287](#): Training for hotel and motel employees to recognize sex trafficking.

[SF2](#): Omnibus health and human services bill

- Included the creation of a statewide sex trafficking victims strategic plan.
- Negotiated funding for residential facilities for chemically dependent women in St. Louis and Olmstead Counties.
- Established training requirements for family and group childcare operation and licensure.

2019-2020

[HF554](#) | [SF342](#): Parents allowed to petition for reestablishment of legal parent and child relationship.

[HF15](#) | [SF235](#): Repealed voluntary relationship defense for criminal sexual conduct crimes.
Repealed the shield to prosecution for marital rape.

[HF745](#) | [SF1393](#): Marriage by minors prohibited and proof of age required for marriage license.

[SF2898](#) | [HF3202](#): Hairstyling and makeup application exempted from licensing.

[SF2415](#) | [HF2544](#): Omnibus higher education and finance bill.

- Appropriation of 6.7 million per year for childcare grants under Minnesota Statutes
- Amended the sexual harassment and violence policy that applies to public and most private postsecondary institutions in Minnesota.

SF12 | HF14: Omnibus health and human services bill.

- Modified the integrated care for high-risk pregnant women pilot program to be an ongoing grant program.
- Amended the grant program for screening and treatment of pre and post-partum women for mood and anxiety disorders to allow state money appropriated for this purpose to be used.
- Clarified that coverage for annual preventative mammogram screening includes digital breast tomosynthesis if the enrollee is at risk for breast cancer, at no cost to the enrollee.
- Prohibited health plans that are providing coverage for the treatment of stage four advanced metastatic cancer or associated conditions from limiting or excluding coverage for a drug approved by the FDA, that is on the plan's formulary.
- Directs the commissioner of health to award grants to nonprofit organizations for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention activities.
- Designated May as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month.
- Specified eligibility for childcare assistance based on child age.
- Made homeless applicants for childcare assistance eligible for 60 hours of childcare assistance per service period for three months from the date the county receives the application.
- Allowed for child co-location with a parent in a licensed residential family-based substance use disorder treatment program for up to 12 months.
- Clarified fire code for special family day care home, allowing two or more licensed programs to be house in the same location.
- Directed the commissioner of human services to develop, publicly post, and distribute a plan-language handbook for family childcare providers.
- Added requirements for accommodations for infants and toddlers in family childcare emergency preparedness plans.
- Allowed for family childcare provider to satisfy telephone requirements with a cellular phone.
- Moved requirements for transporting children in family childcare.
- Permitted the use of substitute caregiver for family childcare up to 500 hours per calendar year.

2021-2022**HF63:** Omnibus public safety bill

- Established the [Office for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives](#), dedicated to preventing and ending the targeting of Indigenous women, children, and two-spirited people within the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs.
- Appropriated \$17,00 in FY22 and \$20,000 in FY23 to implement

SF1315 | HF1403: Pregnant and postpartum inmate placement.

Allowed pregnant and post-partum inmates to be placed in community-based programming for the purpose of participation in childcare programming and to promote mother-child bonding.

SF9 | HF 1: Omnibus employment and economic development.

- Extended MA coverage for pregnant women from 60 days to 12 months postpartum
- Required hospitals with obstetric care to develop or access an education curriculum for staff on anti-racism and implicit bias.
- Required the commissioner of health to explore ways to make midwife and doula training more culturally responsive to groups with the most significant disparities in infant morbidity and mortality.
- Set aside a minimum of \$2,500,000 in grants for women-owned businesses.

2023

HF55 | SF19: Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls

Establishes an office dedicated to preventing and ending the targeting of Black women and girls within the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs.

HF1440 | SF1367: Family homeless prevention and assistance programming funded.

SF2909: Omnibus public safety

Prohibits employers from inquiring about pay history to determine wages for that applicant.

HF1403 | SF2818: Policy and technical changes to behavioral health services.

Repealed pilot project for pregnant and postpartum women with substance abuse disorder.

SF3546 | HF3387: Clarified traditional midwife authority to obtain and administer drugs.

HF3646 | SF3770: Department of Children, Youth and Families.

Organized existing statute regarding programs, services and functions to under the newly established Department of Children, Youth and Families.

HF2 | SF2: Paid Medical and Family Leave Insurance Program.

Provided that an employee may use vacation, sick, paid time off, or disability insurance payments instead of family and medical leave benefits when concurrently eligible for both.

Provided that bonding leave begins at a time chosen by the employee, but such leave must end within 12 months of the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child, except for a child who must remain in the hospital longer than the child's mother. In that case, such leave must end 12 months after the child leaves the hospital. Also allows for bonding leave before the placement or adoption of a child in certain listed circumstances.

Required employers to submit wage detail reports electronically each quarter listing certain information for each employee and each seasonal employee, including total wages paid and hours worked.

A MORE IN-DEPTH LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR THE 2024 SESSION IS COMING THIS SUMMER.

IN THE NEWS

The Minnesota Professional Women's Hockey League made history last month as the inaugural winners of the Walter Cup, defeating Boston 3-0 in the finals. Team Captain Kendall Coyne Schofield, pictured below celebrating the victory, said she owed the win to their own perseverance in the face of a seemingly bleak 5-game losing streak before the playoffs. ["It took a team effort from just everyone you see here...there were a lot of moments where we could have gotten down and out. There were moments where we were down, but we knew we were never out—we stuck together."](#) Congratulations to our champions!



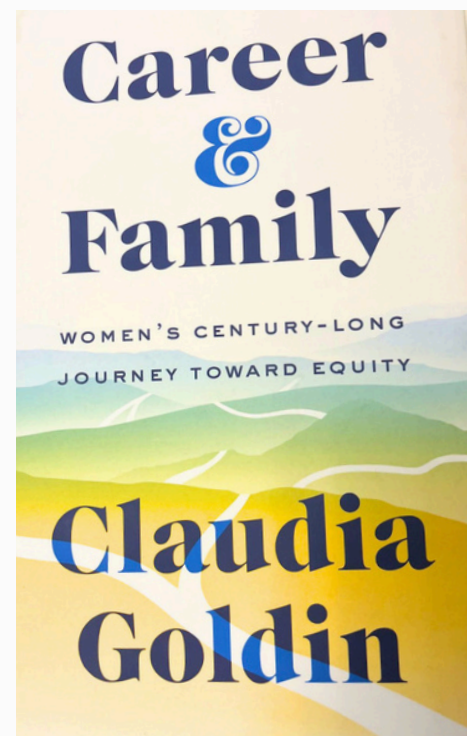
[Minnesota Professional Women's Hockey League Game Recap, 2024](#)

SUMMER READING

[Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity](#)

by Claudia Goldin

While this book was published in 2021, Goldin went on to win the 2023 Nobel Prize in Economics for her research on women's labor market outcomes. This is a book that I (Heather) frequently reference and recommend to others. While it's written by an economist (Goldin is a professor of Economics at Harvard University), it's not just tables of data and economic principles - it is full of case studies and profiles on women throughout the 20th century. It's helped me communicate with and understand parents across generations—including my own mother—about their experiences and choices regarding parenthood, and determining the best path forward for their careers and families.



FOLLOW US!



Our first Advisory Committee Meeting is
July 10th at 10 am at the State Capitol, room G3.

Join us in-person or via livestream [here](#).

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Still can't find what you're looking for?
Email us at oesw@lcc.mn.gov.



"About the most joyous thing a woman can have is a big, hard job everyday, and the courage to tackle it."

ALICE AMES WINTER

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