

December 2021

Looking Toward a New Year for Women and Girls

Hello Friends,

As the Women's Foundation looks to 2022, we're taking note of the **National Strategy to Advance Gender Equality** released by the Biden-Harris Administration just a few weeks ago. The strategy adopts an intersectional approach and considers how race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, and socioeconomic status intersect with gender discrimination and bias. It comes at an inflection point for economic security and health for women in the U.S. and recognizes the need to simultaneously address 10 interconnected strategic priorities to address gender equity, including economic security, gender-based violence, health, and more. **See the full list here.**

We know this national strategy is built on many of the state-level efforts to change policy to better support women and families. For example, state-paid family and medical leave programs have paved a way for us to consider a national paid leave program (the **Montana Legislature considered but failed to pass the FAMLI Act** during the 2021 Legislative Session). Local and state-level efforts build momentum for the kinds of national change proposed by the White House Gender Policy Council.

The Women's Foundation will continue to support community-based organizations that serve women and girls. We'll continue to support state-level efforts to build an economy that cares about caregivers and ensures an equitable recovery.

We are grateful for your partnership in these efforts and will keep you connected to the organizations in our state working for economic security and health for women and girls.

Sincerely,



Kylie Gursky
WFM Program Officer
kylie@mtcf.org

P.S. There is still time to make a year-end gift to support Montana women and

girls! Plus, your gift may qualify you for the **Montana Endowment Tax Credit**.



Year in Review

As we look to 2022, we're reflecting on some of the bigger moments for women in 2021 and what it could mean for the year ahead.

Women in Leadership:

- Kamala Harris became the **first woman, and the first woman of Indian-Jamaican heritage**, to step into the role of Vice President of the United States. Harris who originally ran as a Democratic candidate for president has previously served as the district attorney for San Francisco, and then two terms as California's attorney general as well as serving time as a Senator. Harris also used her power as Vice President to cast a **tie-breaking vote in the Senate** to pass the first of several covid-relief packages by the Biden Administration. She also just recently announced the first-ever **White House Maternal Health Day of Action** which included the announcement of new commitments to support safe pregnancies and childbirth and reduce complications and mortality in the year following birth.
- Secretary Debra Haaland was confirmed as Secretary of the Interior in March. Haaland is an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo and is the first Native American Cabinet member in U.S History. This year she has moved to change **racist names of U.S Federal Geographical locations**, launched a **federal investigation into U.S Residential Schools**, and worked with the Department of the Interior to form a **specialized unit** within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services to pursue justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (**MMIW**).

The Care Economy:

- For the first time, we have seen the federal government refer to child-rearing and elder care as **infrastructure**.
- The House just approved a version of the Biden Administration's Build Back Better plan that includes four weeks of paid medical and family leave. The U.S is currently **one of only seven countries** in the world with zero paid parental leave.
- The **Build Back Better** plan also hopes to address inequalities in infant and maternal mortality (especially high among Black and Indigenous women) and an investment of \$400 billion into childcare to reduce the cost for working families. The Build Back Better plan is now being considered by the

Gender-Based Violence:

- The tragedy of the **Gabby Petito** case raised important questions about the lack of media attention of similar missing people, particularly Indigenous women. In the park where Petito was found over 700 Indigenous women and girls were reported missing over the last decade. Data gathered about violence against **MMIW** is considered an **epidemic, but the extent of the problem is unknown** due to a lack of a central place to gather and analyze the data.
- This year, Montana House Representative Sharon Stewart-Peregoy (D-Crow Agency) **sponsored two bills, then signed by Gov. Gianforte** to address the MMIW crisis in our state.
- Oxygen released a featured documentary about **MMIW in Montana**. Increased awareness of the issue and the miscarriage of justice for families affected by MMIW has allowed some Montana families' stories to finally be listened to in a way they were not given the opportunity to do so before.

Meet Ursula Pappas

"The best thing I can leave behind is something that will continue doing good for others. I believe women should support one another and my hope through this gift is to help generations of women grow and succeed."

-Ursula Pappas



Ask Ursula Pappas how she first fell in love with Montana and she will tell you about a grilled cheese sandwich on her way to Glacier National Park. Ask her why she believes in giving back and she will tell you about her desire to provide opportunities to others.

In 2021, Ursula committed an estate gift of \$1 million to the Montana Community Foundation to benefit the Women's Foundation of Montana (WFM) after her passing. As a gift to an endowment, Ursula can fulfill her philanthropic goals of supporting a cause she cares about and giving in a way that keeps on giving to others long after she's gone. Her generosity will have a meaningful impact on Montana women and girls forever.

Growing up poor in a steel mill town, Ursula always wanted to do more and was given the opportunity to do so. Her desire is to help others, especially women, have the same chance. **[Read Ursula's whole story here.](#)**

We are truly grateful for Ursula's generosity and foresight that will help to further our mission of advancing women's economic independence and creating a brighter future for girls.

PowerHouse Blog

Kelly Curtis, WFM VISTA, has compiled two articles for you on Native-Owned Montana businesses, and

books written by or about Indigenous culture for all kids aged toddler to high school. If you are looking for gifts to give loved ones in your life this holiday season, check them out. Some of Kelly's favorites are **Sage and Oats Trading Post** (Helena) pictured right, and the books **Firekeeper's Daughter** and **The Marrow Thieves**, which are both next on her reading list. [Read more here](#) and [here](#).



'Tis the Season....To Update Your PowerHouse Profile!

Not sure when you last updated your PowerHouse profile or if you even have one set up? Click [here](#) to update or create a profile and starting connecting with other women.

PowerHouse Montana, an initiative of the Women's Foundation of Montana, is an online platform designed to connect Montana women to the mentors and resources they need to succeed. [Learn more and sign up at powerhousemt.org.](#)

Volunteer and Development Opportunities in Montana

Montana Women's Business Center at **Prospera Business Network** is excited to announce a new Montana Women's Mentorship Program, 56Strong! **56Strong** will connect women entrepreneurs and business leaders from all of Montana's 56 counties. The program will run for six months with a virtual kick-off meeting in January and a virtual conclusion meeting in June. The expectation is that mentors and mentees will meet monthly for about one-hour between February and June. The meeting times and days will be set by the mentors and mentees. 56Strong has had a lot of significant mentee applications but is looking for mentors, so apply if you would like to be a mentor! Applications to participate are due on December 31st.

The **Women's Entrepreneur and Leadership Lab** at the University of Montana is hiring- check out the [opportunities here](#).

Montana Women Vote is hosting its 16th Annual **Women's Policy Leadership Insitute**. The Insitute will run virtually from February 2nd-9th and you can register [here](#).

There are many websites that can help you find the perfect volunteer opportunity for you. **Want to Give Your Time? Check These 20 Websites for Volunteer Opportunities** is a great article to narrow down the website that meets your needs.

Visit **MNA's Nonprofit Job Board** where nonprofit job searching is catered to

meet your needs. The Nonprofit Job Board offers the best nonprofit jobs in the region, email alerts, customized searches, resume posting.



Together we can empower Montana women and girls to pursue their dreams.

Give Now

About the Women's Foundation of Montana

Established in 1999, the Women's Foundation of Montana is a program of Montana Community Foundation and on a mission to advance women's economic independence and create a brighter future for our girls. Learn more at wfmontana.org.



MONTANA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

