

February 2022

Hello Everyone,

Earlier this month, I had the immense privilege of attending the **Montana Women Vote (MWV) 16th Annual Women's Policy Leadership Institute (WPLI)** on February 2-9. MWV has been a longtime grantee of the Women's Foundation and we were proud to support this impactful event for another year. I attended daily sessions on a wide variety of topics, such as voting rights and climate inequity, what's at stake in Indian Country, and the healthcare policies we should expect in 2022. Here are a few of my takeaways and highlights of the conference.

- WPLI kicked off with a discussion on the complex issue of the racial wealth gap, what it means nationwide (click [here](#) for an in-depth explanation), and what it looks like in our state. For Montana, the racial gap is more difficult to determine because of the way these surveys are conducted. Native Americans are frequently left out, leaving a huge information gap on how the racial wealth gap affects them specifically. Click [here](#) for an in-depth breakdown of the information gap and data segregation that leaves out Indigenous American identities.
- I learned about the voting issues tribes in Montana are currently facing, which election laws were debated last spring, and **how access to polling places continues to be an equal access issue** among Indian Nations in Montana.
- As the conversation around food security and food sovereignty has increased in light of the pandemic, it was interesting to hear a Native-led conversation by panelists Termaine Edmo, Mike Durglo, LJ Bird, Angeline Cheek, and moderator, Destini Vaile, (click [here](#) for bios on all the WPLI presenters) on what climate justice and climate inequities currently look like and **how they affect Native plant and animal growth and patterns**, threatening **tribal sovereignty** and traditional practices. (Click [here](#) for a recording of this climate inequity session as well as all other recorded WPLI sessions).

Opportunities like WPLI always add layers of knowledge to how I look at everyday issues, complicating the way I understand the world and guiding me to see both how not only my work but also my activism can be more holistic, and how I can show up with my neighbors, friends, and family. As we head into the last weeks of February and further into 2022, I'm using what I've learned to shape how the Women's Foundation and PowerHouse Montana can show up for you!

If you are interested in working on any of these issues connect with **Montana Women Vote** or your local food sovereignty and climate justice organizations to get started on action steps in your communities.

Sincerely,





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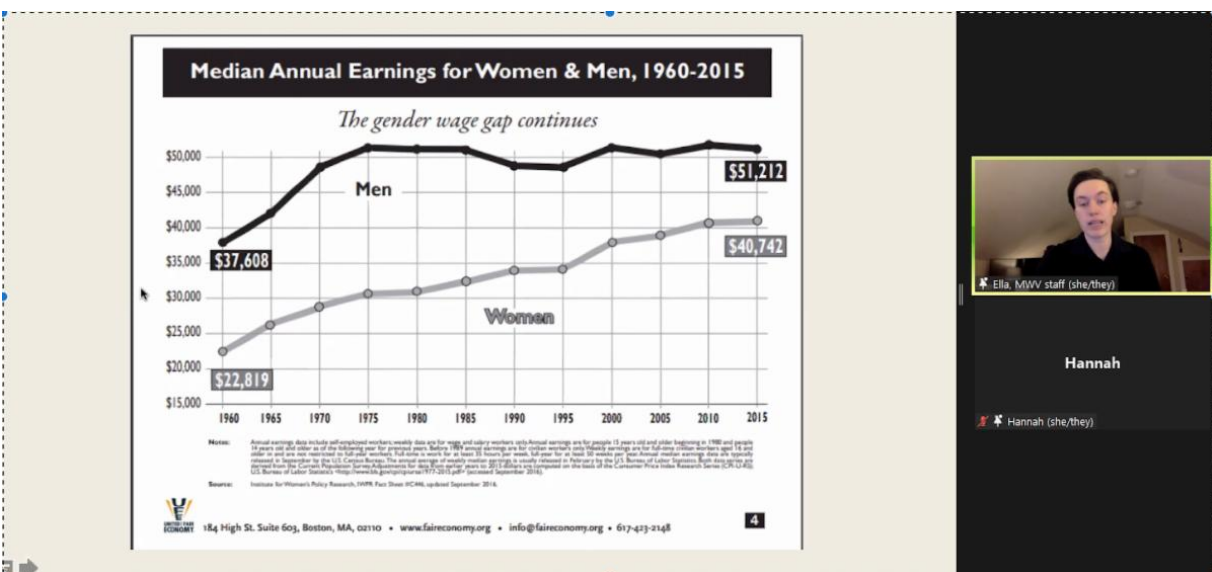
A Look at Women's Foundation of Montana Grantees

The Women's Foundation of Montana was able to support the work of Montana Women Vote and Thrive this past month. Both organizations are doing good work supporting children and families in Montana.

Montana Women Vote

"Our **16th Annual Women's Policy and Leadership Conference** was a success - over 350 people from across the state joined in conversations about the racial wealth divide, fat politics, state-tribal policy and Indigenous justice, and more. We appreciate the support and partnership of the Women's Foundation of Montana in making this year's conference happen."

-SJ Howell, Executive Director, **Montana Women Vote**





"**Thrive** has very exciting news! We have purchased and are renovating the former Red Chair building in Bozeman to become our new home this August/September. This will allow us to continue expanding our services and support more kids and families well into the future. Part of this expanded programming includes our new Spanish speaking Parent Liaison. In a few short months, she has already done so much outreach to families, established a free English class for parents, created resources and parenting classes in Spanish and has become a valuable asset to this growing population of local families. The last couple of years has brought numerous challenges for the children and families we serve and we are grateful for the continued support of the Women's Foundation of Montana."

-Brittney Eilers, Business Partnership Officer, **Thrive**

Black History Month and Women's History Month

Black History Month falls in the month of February and March marks Women's History Month, both important and intentional times in the calendar year to stop and remember those who have left their mark in the complicated legacy of American history, and in the trailblazers currently writing our futures. We've compiled some content for you, a book, a documentary, and some articles on women who have created their own powerful legacies, for Montana and for our county.

Black History Month

Past: **Stagecoach Mary (Fields)**

By 1895, at sixty years old, Mary Fields secured a job as a Star Route Carrier which used a stagecoach to deliver mail in the unforgiving weather and rocky terrain of Montana. This made her the first African American woman to work for the U.S. Postal Service. She never missed a day, and her reliability earned her the nickname "Stagecoach Mary" due to her preferred mode of transportation.

You can stream a documentary about **Stagecoach Mary** on **ALLBLK TV**.

Present: **Erin Jackson, First Black Woman to Win a Speed Skating Gold Medal**

Erin Jackson of the United States became the first Black woman to win a speed skating gold medal. She hopes her victory will open doors for people looking to participate in winter sports. Jackson became the most dominant 500-meter skater in the world in only the past few

months.

Women's History Month

Past: **Bold Women in Montana History by Beth Judy**

We recommend this well-researched and engaging novel that digs deep into the powerful women of Montana's past. Beth Judy writes about Jeannette Rankin, the first U.S. Congresswoman, Native American activist, Elouise Cobell, rodeo star sisters, Alice and Marge Greenough, and the Women's Protective Union, to name a few.

Present: **The Women of Jeopardy**

Amy Schneider had a 40-game winning streak on the game show Jeopardy! from November 2021 to January 2022, the second-longest win streak in the show's history, behind only Ken Jennings (74 games). She is the most successful woman ever to compete on the show, in terms of both her streak and her \$1.3 million in winnings. Schneider is a trans woman; she completed gender transition in 2017. On January 19, 2022, Schneider was awarded a **GLAAD Special Recognition** honor for her *Jeopardy!* Performance.

Mayim Bialik is an acclaimed actress, author, producer, host, podcaster, mental health advocate, and neuroscientist. Bialik joins Jeopardy! as the host of the show's primetime and spinoff series, including the upcoming all-new Jeopardy! National College Championship set to air on ABC in 2022.

PowerHouse Blog

Tara Mastel Helps Relmagine What is Possible

Kelly Curtis, Women's Foundation VISTA, got the incredible opportunity to interview Tara Mastel on her role in **Relmaging Rural** and her passion for seeing rural communities succeed. Check out our blog post [here](#) and read all about how Tara got her start, her favorite parts about the program, and how we can change the narrative around small towns.



Have You Remembered 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 start 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.



Support Montana Women and Girls!

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