



Women Employed

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Grand Victoria Foundation commits \$5 million to benefit Women Employed Designated permanent fund established at the Chicago Community Trust

Chicago – Citing Women Employed’s strong track record of innovation and results, Grand Victoria Foundation is committing \$5 million to the Chicago Community Trust to benefit Women Employed, providing an ongoing stream of support for current programs and future directions. The fund is part of a \$10 million commitment by Grand Victoria Foundation, with the other \$5 million benefiting Delta Institute, an environmental nonprofit organization.

“These are two high-performing, high-potential organizations taking on critical issues in Illinois today, and we’re delighted to be able to help them test new solutions and deepen their impact,” said Nancy Fishman, the Foundation’s executive director. “We see these grants as long-term investments, not only in these strong organizations but in the state’s economic future.”

Women Employed was chosen as a recipient of the special grant after a lengthy selection process and as part of the Foundation’s broader strategy to strengthen Illinois’ economy and workforce.

“Working women have made significant strides in the past 30 years, but millions of them still face major barriers to fair wages, adequate benefits, and better jobs,” said Anne Ladky, Women Employed’s executive director. “They need better pay, fair workplaces, and benefits like paid sick time, as well as access to post-secondary education and training. Simply put, for millions of women, work isn’t working. This funding will help us change that.”

In particular, the Grand Victoria gift will enable Women Employed to engage more supporters in a long-term campaign to address the problems of low-wage work. Such a campaign will have beneficiaries beyond women, according to Ladky.

It's up to us.

“We believe that improving the prospects of low-paid working women is good for all – families, communities, and businesses,” said Ladky. “Right now, 67 percent of poor Illinois children are being raised by working parents. Better wages and opportunities for these parents are essential to building a strong future for their children. Businesses will benefit, too, as there’s growing evidence that investing in low-paid workers can improve the corporate bottom line.”

“Most foundations – including ours – focus their funding on specific projects, which can leave organizations with few dollars to support their operations,” said Fishman. “Just as it is for businesses, working capital is the lifeblood for successful organizations in the nonprofit sector. But providing it is still a relative rarity in philanthropy. We wanted to help ensure they always have the time, the team, and the technology they need to do their best work.

“We’re struck by the innovative approaches and real results that Women Employed and Delta Institute have demonstrated, but we’re even more excited about what they can become,” said Fishman. “Their work and leadership are generating fresh answers to some of the critical questions we face in Illinois. How can we create better opportunities for our state’s lowest-paid workers? How can we protect the environment in ways that boost economic and community development? These issues go to the heart of our foundation’s mission and our state’s future.”

Women Employed is Illinois’ leading advocate for economic advancement for women in low-paying jobs. The organization has won improvements in workplace practices and increased access to education and training. Women Employed has also built solid support among policymakers for the aid students need to enter and succeed in college, and it leads a statewide collaboration to improve educational outcomes for low-income working college students. Established in 1973, the organization has played a key role in strengthening equal opportunity policies, reducing employment discrimination, expanding work-family benefits, and reducing barriers to advancement for millions of women.

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