



# FACT SHEET

## Women's Educational Equity Act Grants

### WEEA Program

The Women's Educational Equity Act program is the only federal education program dedicated to promoting equitable education for women and girls. Since its creation in 1974, WEEA grants have empowered educators and advocates in communities across the country to develop programs to combat sex discrimination and promote gender equity, with a special focus on women and girls who face multiple forms of discrimination due to race or ethnicity, disability, or age. Over the past 28 years, these grants have made over 700 projects possible.

With limited funding, the WEEA program efficiently maximizes its resources to reach a continually growing audience of educators, parents and students interested in gender equity. Last year alone, the WEEA Equity Resource Center distributed over 20,000 free *WEEA Digests* to the public, while its website received over one million visits.

The WEEA Equity Resource Center offers materials and other resources to schools, school boards, colleges and universities, community organizations, businesses, parents, and students throughout the country. With online professional development courses, newsletters, and low-cost products, the center allows for the larger public to gain from the knowledge acquired through specific WEEA-funded projects. Our website, [www.edc.org/WomensEquity](http://www.edc.org/WomensEquity), is an accessible resource for teachers and prospective teachers looking to incorporate gender equity in their classrooms.

Though the gender gap in education has narrowed since the passage of Title IX, the broadest federal legislation addressing gender and education, many issues remain urgent. Read on to discover how current WEEA grantees working in the field are addressing these critical issues.

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### WEEA Grantees

#### The FACTS:

Twenty-three percent of Latinas, 14 percent of African American women, and 7 percent of white women dropped out of high school in 1997. Moreover, only 10 percent of Latinas 25 years or older have four years or more of college.

—*Trends in Educational Equity of Girls & Women, 2000*

#### WEEA Solutions & Interventions:

- The **Educational Enhancement for Mothers and Daughters Program (mother-daughter.education.utep.edu/)** at the University of Texas-El Paso, addresses two major barriers to Latinas' participation in higher education: low educational and career expectations of girls and their parents and lack of knowledge about how to prepare for, finance, and succeed in college. Since 1986, the project has worked with over 3,000 mothers and daughters. This longtime WEEA-funded project is a documented pioneer in the area of Mother-Daughter programs. Its staff has responded to requests throughout the country from people interested in using their program model to establish similar programs. Program Founder Dr. Josie Tinajero has built lasting partnerships with six such replicated programs in Texas and California.

#### The FACTS:

When controlling for other factors, young men with disabilities earn \$1,814 more per year than young women with disabilities.

—*U.S. Department of Education, Twentieth Annual Report to Congress*

#### WEEA Solutions & Interventions:

- The **Working It Out Together II: College Women with Disabilities and Employment Project** in Boston, Massachusetts, is working to increase the higher education and job options for women with disabili-

ties. In addition to implementing a mentoring curriculum at postsecondary institutions, the five-year project (2000–2005) is building the capacity of colleges' disability services and career services staff to assist women with disabilities in launching their careers and in developing a statewide coalition dedicated to improving their employment opportunities. This project is effecting positive change in the way colleges and universities respond to the career service needs of women with disabilities.

- **Project EDGE: Education for Disability and Gender Equity** ([www.disabledwomen.net/edge](http://www.disabledwomen.net/edge)) in Albany, California, is working to reduce bias and increase respect for gender differences and disability-related diversity by providing high school students with information about disabled women and men in history, biology, civics, health, and literature. Project EDGE has developed a CD and guidebook addressing the need for gender and disability-sensitive high school materials and has disseminated over 250 copies since its release in October 2001. The project website, operational since June 2001, includes online lessons to educate all students about men and women with disabilities working in the sciences and humanities. With over 500 visits a month, this site is infusing online learning with a unique perspective on equity.
- Former WEEA grantee and leading educational equity advocate **Harilyn Rousso** recently collaborated with the WEEA Equity Resource Center to publish *Gender Matters*, an in-service training program for educators working with students with disabilities. This book is designed to promote gender equity in special education and inclusive general education settings. With the help of the WEEA Equity Resource Center and WEEA funding, Rousso's work is filling an unquestionable void in the study of gender and disability as evidenced by a number of inquiries and pre-publication orders.

#### **The FACTS:**

In 1996, women were less than 1 percent of auto mechanics (0.6 percent), carpenters (0.9 percent), plumbers (0.7 percent), and only 1.1 percent of electricians, and 3.5 percent of welders.

—Institute for Women in Trades, Technology, and Science, *School-to-Work and Nontraditional Employment Fact Sheet*

#### **WEEA Solutions & Interventions:**

- In October 2001, the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE) issued a report on the current crisis in vocational education, "Invisible Again: The Impact of Changes in Federal Funding on Vocational Programs for Women and Girls." The 1999 Perkins Act eliminated provisions for gender equity and state sex equity coordinators with the intention that individual states would assume the responsibility for ensuring equity in vocational education. The NCWGE report discloses the dismal outcome of this assumption—states have not allocated funds to promote vocational education for women and girls. In fact, the report finds that only 12 states have protected programs while no states have promoted programs. Of the nineteen states with programs "losing ground," two are home to WEEA grantees, Washington and South Dakota. This demonstrates how WEEA is supporting critical innovation as other funding has evaporated.
- **Try a Trade, Try a Technology Project** in Auburn, Washington, is working to increase the number of women enrolled in trades and technology-related postsecondary programs and apprenticeships, areas where women continue to be underrepresented. This four-year project (1998–2002) addresses three critical needs: limited exposure in K–12 to trades, technology, and other nontraditional career information for young women; teachers', counselors' and parents' lack of information about trades and technology career options; and lack of community involvement in providing realistic career exploration opportunities in the schools.
- **Expanding Your Options: The Road to the Future** in Pierre, South Dakota, is focusing on training in its career education efforts. The project is developing train-the-trainer workshops on issues such as creating equitable classrooms, sexual harassment prevention, conducting equity climate self-evaluations, and developing life action plans. The project will also assist the South Dakota school-to-work system by developing models for equity and career awareness, career exploration, and career planning for all K–14 students, with an emphasis on developing equitable learning environments and promoting high-wage careers that lead to self-sufficiency for Native American and other women of color.