



January 25, 2023

Representative Dave Pinto, Chair  
Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
St. Paul, MN

Dear Chair Pinto,

As the President and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, I write to express our support for the Governor and Lt. Governor's budget to support families and children across the state of Minnesota. Investments in people who experience inequities are critical in building stronger pathways to economic prosperity and well-being.

For 40 years, the Women's Foundation has invested more than \$45 million in organizations across the state and advanced policies so women, girls, and their families can thrive. Our research with the Center on Women, Gender, & Public Policy at the Humphrey School shows that we continue to have stark disparities when it comes families' ability to: access care for their children; access safe and trauma-informed services and housing as survivors of sex trafficking; access healthcare and healing; and attain quality educational outcomes.

Women are the center of families. For the more than 50% of working mothers who are the primary breadwinners in families in Minnesota – and 74% of Black mothers and 77% of Indigenous mothers – we know access to safe and affordable child care is essential. Low-income workers, Black, Indigenous and women of color are more likely to have to reduce their work hours or leave the workforce because of their caregiving responsibilities. Low-income workers, and Black, Indigenous and women of color are more likely to have to reduce their work hours or leave the workforce because of their caregiving responsibilities. Minnesota needs a strong ecosystem to provide high-quality childcare at affordable prices. It needs to include a broad spectrum of policy and funding solutions such as building the care workforce, which is predominantly made up of women, increasing rates, creating more access to CCAP and other programs to create affordability for families. It needs to include a broad spectrum of policy and funding solutions, such as building the care workforce, which is predominantly led by women, while increasing rates and creating more access to CCAP and other programs that make care affordable for families.

In addition to child care, children and families need safe and affordable housing and a safety net so they can return to stable housing as quickly as possible. That's why we support the investments in the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor Act to provide appropriate, trauma-informed services attached to housing for vulnerable youth.



We support the dedicated investments in the Tribal American Indian Child Welfare Initiative and American Indian Well-Being Unit and additional investments in culturally relevant programs and healing. We know when we work in partnership with the Tribal Nations, we create a state where everyone can thrive.

Educational disparities continue to limit the potential of our state's future and our families. As a result of inequities in our educational systems, we know that Black, Indigenous, and children of color face lifelong challenges to achieving economic prosperity. We support funding and policies that focus on the children most frequently shortchanged, through investments in special education, hiring and retaining teachers of color, menstrual equity, and school-based meals so all children can learn.

We thank the Governor and Lt. Governor for working to create a more equitable and just economy for all Minnesotans by investing in the child care system and its workers, responding to and preventing homelessness and human trafficking, and investing in our education system and those who face the greatest need. We urge the legislature to fund these priorities.

Thank you,

Gloria Perez

President and CEO

Women's Foundation of Minnesota