9:00-10:30 AM: Riding the Wave: The Ups and Downs of Financial Aid

Despite the importance of financial aid in helping low-income adults prepare for new careers, it has only recently become a popular topic among workforce development groups. Learn more about how funding cuts, Pell changes, and merit aid have changed the financial aid environment, how financial aid in different states compare, and what some states are doing to preserve or increase financial aid.

Women Employed Presenters:
Mary Kay Devine
Meegan Dugan Bassett
Sarah Labadie

WPFP State Partners:
Frank Waterous, Bell Policy Center (CO)
Taifa Butler, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute (GA)

10:30-10:45 AM: Break

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM: Breaking from Tradition: Key Issues Facing Adult Students and Policies that Make a Difference

Low-income, adult students often face different financial aid challenges than traditional students. In this session, we will address: the elimination of Ability-to-Benefit eligibility, merit challenges to need-based grant programs, the impact of unstable and unpredictable financial aid, the interplay of reality with ideal practice, and special types of financial aid. You’ll begin identifying key financial aid issues in your state, prepare to address potential opposition, share strategies, and learn key questions you need to ask to make financial aid more adult-friendly in your state.

Women Employed Presenter:
Sarah Labadie

WPFP State Partners:
Tony Lee, Statewide Poverty Action Network (WA)
Kate Bolz, Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest (NE)
12:15 – 1:15 PM:
Lunch

1:15 – 2:30 PM:
Raising the Roof: A Case Study on the Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP)

Increasing or maintaining financial aid can seem impossible when state budgets are tight. Learn how Women Employed and other advocates have engaged state leaders and made them champions for financial aid for non-traditional students. Discussion will focus on sharing strategies for improving financial aid at the state policy level.

Women Employed Presenter:
Meegan Dugan Bassett
Sarah Labadie

Guest Presenter:
David Miller, former Illinois State Representative (D-Dolton, IL 29th District)

WPFP State Partner:
Gerry Bradley, New Mexico Voices for Children (NM)

2:30 – 2:45 PM:
Break

2:45 – 4:00 PM:
Grass-Roots Mobilizing to Advance Financial Aid Policy Goals: Student Advocates for Success

Organizing students to advocate for financial aid can be a very successful strategy in maintaining and increasing financial aid funding and associated policies. Learn how Women Employed employs various tactics to organize students, develop advocates, and increase political capital.

Women Employed Presenters:
Jaela Neal
Elena Herrera

WPFP State Partner:
Michelle Siqueiros and Jessie Ryan, Campaign for College Opportunity (CA)