



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Foundation awards \$286,000 in girlsBEST Fund grants

(August 24, Minneapolis) — The Women's Foundation of Minnesota has awarded \$286,000 in grants for a third and final year of funding to 21 nonprofit organizations through its girlsBEST (girls Building Economic Success Together) Fund. The grant period is August 1, 2015 to July 31, 2016.

Established in 2001, the girlsBEST Fund awards multi-year grants to programs that build the future economic success of Minnesota's girls, ages 10-18. Priority is given to programs that include outreach to underserved, underrepresented populations of girls around the state. Grantees are funded in one of four program tracks: Academic; Entrepreneurial; Employment Development & High-Paying/High-Skill Careers; and Public Education & Advocacy.

Grantees:

Bagosendaan (Mahnommen) | \$13,500 — To support talking circles, mentoring, and horseback riding to develop and promote self-confidence, initiative, independent thinking, and life skills to help low-income girls stay in school and become successful adults.

Casa de Esperanza (St. Paul) | \$18,000 — To support Peer Leaders, a leadership development program for Latina girls focused on peer-to-peer education strategies, training, and community action projects that target issues important to the girls themselves, their families, and the community.

Dakota Wicohan (Morton) | \$16,000 — To support the Wikoska peer leadership project, which builds the leadership capacity of Native American girls in the Redwood Falls-Lower Sioux Community. The program includes culturally relevant mentoring with an academic and community focus, preserves Dakota as a living language, and transmits Dakota lifeways to future generations.

Girl Scouts of MN & WI River Valleys (Rochester) | \$13,500 — To support Girl Scouts ConnectZ, which develops the leadership of diverse and low-income girls through building healthy relationships and self-esteem, college and career readiness, service learning, financial literacy, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

Girl Scouts of MN & WI River Valleys (Worthington) | \$13,500 — To support Girls Scouts ConnectZ, which provides additional academic support, mentorship, and enrichment opportunities for girls.

Hmong American Partnership (St. Paul) | \$16,000 — To support the Hmong Girls Career Program, which provides girls with academic support, internships, and the opportunity to connect with a professional adult Hmong woman for group and one-on-one mentoring.

Lake Superior School District (Two Harbors) | \$15,000 — To support all-girl industrial technology programming and the expansion of current class offerings at Two Harbors High School and within surrounding communities.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul Chapter of The Links, Inc. (Twin Cities Metro) | \$11,000 — To support Linked 4 Leadership, a program that provides leadership development, college preparation curriculum, and mentoring to high-performing African American junior and senior girls, ages 16-18.

Men as Peacemakers (Duluth) | \$16,000 — To support the Girls Restorative Program, which identifies at-risk girls and provides them with support to graduate from high school, including tutoring, mentoring, and connection to post-secondary institutions.

Minnesota African Women's Association (Brooklyn Park/North Hennepin County) | \$18,000 — To support the African Girls Initiative for Leadership and Empowerment (AGILE), a program that provides culturally specific after-school and summer programming for Pan African girls, ages 14-18.

Minnesota Urban Debate League (Minneapolis/St. Paul) | \$13,500 — To empower girl debaters to become engaged learners, critical thinkers, active citizens, and effective advocates for themselves and their communities, and skills training to graduate from high school, attend college, and develop leadership skills to ensure their long-term economic and social success.

New Horizons Crisis Center (Redwood Falls) | \$13,500 — To support the Girls Relationship Program, a peer learning initiative that gives girls knowledge, tools, and an outlet to address the issues they face with mentors and peers, in order to help them make more positive, informed choices in their present and future.

Peacemaker Resources (Warroad) | \$13,500 — To support Girls Lead, a summer program that emphasizes developing the self as the first step in leadership and empowers and equips girls to have positive relationships with self, others, and community.

Pillsbury United Communities - Brian Coyle Community Center (Minneapolis) | \$13,500 — To support Sisterhood of the Traveling Scarf, a youth developed and operated entrepreneurial venture managed by the girls' group of the Coyle Center's youth program.

Project FINE (Winona) | \$13,500 — To support Girls Reaching Above and Beyond (GRAB), a program that helps immigrant and refugee girls discover their identity and strengths and create a roadmap to pursue their dreams.

SURGE! (Mankato) | \$10,000 — To empower at-risk girls in junior and senior high school and help them understand their own ability to control their future through positive thinking, identifying their strengths, goal-setting, and planning.

WE WIN Institute (Minneapolis) | \$15,000 — To support Women of Distinction, a program creating success for African American girls by giving them knowledge and experiences that honor and celebrate their cultural roots, instilling pride, confidence, and academic and social skills, and developing positive peer relationships necessary to support each other towards becoming capable, responsible, and determined women.

Western Community Action, Inc. (Marshall) | \$13,500 — To support Generation Next II: Building Young Women of Excellence, a program that addresses academic readiness, career investigation, and financial resources and uses mentoring to encourage girls, grades 9-12, from low-income families in rural Cottonwood and Jackson Counties to pursue post-secondary education.

Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (St. Paul) | \$13,500 — To support Girls Getting Ahead in Leadership (GGALS), a program building financial and economic capacity for immigrant and refugee girls by helping them stay in school and pursue college and future career goals.

YouthCARE (Minneapolis/St. Paul) | \$11,000 — To support the Young Women's Mentoring Program, which builds leadership, employment readiness, and life skills of girls living in the low-income public housing communities of Little Earth of United Tribes (Minneapolis) and McDonough Homes (St. Paul) and allows them to become positive role models for younger girls living in their communities.

Planning Grants:

Girls Who Code (Bemidji) | **\$5,000** — To provide three tiers of computer programming training to girls, grades 6-12 -- the majority, Native American -- for exposure to high-skill/high-wage career options and to boost their confidence and interest in pursuing STEM education.

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About the Women's Foundation of Minnesota

The Women's Foundation of Minnesota is a statewide community foundation that invests in social change to achieve equality for all women and girls in Minnesota. The Foundation funds innovative social change programs, publishes annual research on the status of Minnesota's women and girls, advocates public policy, and builds philanthropy for gender equality. It is the oldest statewide women's foundation in the country. More at www.wfmn.org, [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).



Special thanks to the Walmart Foundation for its generous support of the girlsBEST Fund.