

## **Women ' s Fund of Western Massachusetts Leadership Institute for Political Impact**

The Women ' s Fund of Western Massachusetts wants local women to make an impact on social change by increasing their involvement in civic affairs and even running for political office. To help develop future leaders, the foundation has developed the Leadership Institute for Political Impact.

The Women ' s Fund Leadership Institute for Political Impact is a non-partisan initiative designed to address the civic interests and skills of women in our region. The 12-month institute incorporates intensive workshops, technology, the development of county cohorts and the expertise of mentors. The institute will provide women with education and increased confidence in their political leadership potential through emphasis on four primary focus areas. The focus areas include personal leadership, community organizing, legislative process and policy, and running for political office.

A year of educational workshops is scheduled to take place on full-day Saturdays that will cover the topic areas listed above. Participants will work in the large group as well as smaller, county-specific cohorts. One or two mentors will be assigned to each county to support them throughout the year. A certificate of completion ceremony will occur in May, 2011.

**The goals of the Women ' s Fund Leadership Institute for Political Impact are as follows:**

### **Process Goals ( Immediate )**

- Help participants develop political literacy and competencies
- Provide participants with in-depth knowledge about Massachusetts' legislative processes
- Help participants overcome perceived barriers and increase their political participation
- Provide an opportunity to develop cohort relationships among county representatives

### **Outcome Goals ( Short-term )**

- Facilitate the production of state policy that reflects the needs of Massachusetts ' women, girls, their families and communities
- Increase community-based participation in policy formation and implementation
- Build the capacity of participants to share their expertise as a means to build their county and community capacity to use policy and legislative processes to address problems
- Strengthen collaboration among social justice organizations and women ' s groups

### **Impact Goals ( Long-term )**

- Improve the lives of all people in Western Massachusetts communities
- Create cadres of women in the four counties with expertise in the legislative process
- Increase the number of Western Massachusetts women running for public office at all levels



**Incorporated in 1997, the Women ' s Fund of Western Massachusetts ( W F W M )** is a public foundation building better communities for all by serving the women and girls in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Counties. W F W M advances social change philanthropy to create economic and social equality for women and girls in Western Massachusetts through grantmaking and strategic advocacy. To date, we have awarded over \$1.3 million in grants focusing on education, economic justice, and freedom from violence.