

December 15, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President-Elect  
United States of America

We, the undersigned organizations, applaud your commitment to creating or saving 2.5 million jobs at this critical juncture. An investment in infrastructure, school modernization, and the retrofitting of public buildings for energy efficiency will stimulate the national economy and contribute to the economic security of the newly employed workers and their families. However, specific provisions are needed to guarantee that women have fair access to the job opportunities created through the economic recovery plan, to preserve and create jobs in fields where women currently represent a majority of the workforce, and to provide work supports essential to vulnerable families.

We urge you to work with Congress to ensure that the economic recovery legislation benefits all Americans and takes positive steps to eliminate the workforce segregation that exists today in many of the infrastructure and green jobs that will be funded through the economic recovery package. To that end, we recommend the following:

**I. Set goals for women's hiring and retention in nontraditional jobs funded by federal contracts, and ensure compliance to reach these goals.** In nontraditional job categories, employers who receive federal economic recovery funding should be required to set ambitious goals for the hiring of qualified women. Women continue to be underrepresented in many of these jobs, particularly in the construction industry. Typically, these jobs provide family-supporting wages and benefits far beyond those earned by other women with the same level of education. Contract compliance should be enforced both by on-site independent monitors and by the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP), which must be given a mandate and funding to engage in meaningful oversight and enforcement activities.

**II. Ensure funding for recruitment, training, and supportive services programs for women in nontraditional occupations.** Dedicate funds within each project funded by the economic recovery package to recruit women, support a range of training programs dedicated to preparing women for these projects, and provide necessary work supports including child care and transportation assistance. Short-term skill training programs exist and should be funded to meet the requirement of getting employees to work quickly and to respond to employers' concerns about the shortage of skilled workers. The contractor selection process should give priority to projects and contractors that provide family-supporting wages, good benefits, and family-friendly leave policies.

**III. Fund programs that will create quality jobs in human service fields that currently employ large numbers of women.** For instance, investments in education, libraries, child care facilities, and domestic violence prevention and treatment programs will not only promote important policy goals, but also increase job opportunities for women. Legislation creating such jobs should include provisions to encourage self-sufficiency-level wages, benefits, and career pathways.

**IV. Increase funding for safety net and education programs.** Dollars spent on Unemployment Insurance modernization, TANF, nutrition and energy assistance, child care, child support enforcement, housing, health care, transportation assistance, and education assistance are vital to

supporting women at work, will increase our nation's human capital, and will be quickly channeled back into the economy.

We look forward to working with you and Congress to enact these provisions and contribute to an economic recovery that works for all Americans. Additional information can be obtained from Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) and Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment, co-chairs of the National Coalition on Women and Job Training. Please do not hesitate to contact Joan Kuriansky, Executive Director of WOW, at (202) 464-1596 or [jkuriansky@wowonline.org](mailto:jkuriansky@wowonline.org) or Tiffany Boiman, Women Work! Director of Programs and Policy, at (202) 467-6346 or [tboiman@womenwork.org](mailto:tboiman@womenwork.org).

Sincerely,