



NEWS

JB Pritzker, Governor

Michael D. Kleinik, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2021

Contact:

Paul Cicchini 217-785-1719

Paul.Cicchini@illinois.gov

Pritzker Administration Announces \$350 Thousand Partnership with Women Employed to Boost Wages for Women

*Illinois Department of Labor partnering with Women Employed for education
initiative*

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) today announced a \$350,000 partnership with Women Employed to inform low-income women across Illinois, in particular low-wage women of color, about pay equity and pay transparency standards. The partnership is made possible by funding from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Fostering Access, Rights and Education (FARE) grant program. Illinois is one of six states and territories in the country to receive a grant for this work.

“Part of the mission at the Illinois Department of Labor is to protect the rights and wages of all workers in the state. Through this grant, and a working partnership with Women Employed, IDOL will raise awareness of pay equity and pay transparency among low-wage women workers,” said **Illinois Department of Labor Director Michael Kleinik**.

“As chair of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, we know it is important to open pathways centered on gender that will improve justice, equity, and opportunity. This partnership between the state and Women Employed does just that by helping address the wage gap that hurts Black and Hispanic women in particular, who earn 63 cents and 57 cents on the dollar, respectively, compared to men,” said **Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**.

As recipients of the FARE grant, IDOL, in partnership with Women Employed and other community groups will:

- Conduct outreach to working women who are paid low wages and are otherwise marginalized and underserved.
- Publicize educational materials across a variety of platforms, including social media, in-person or virtual events, and one-on-one consultations.
- Assist women workers with navigating and calculating benefits.

- Connect and refer women workers to additional services, benefits, and legal help as needed.
- Through a train-the-trainer model, train women in the workforce to become advocates for rights, benefits, and assistance in their own communities.

“Women Employed is excited for the opportunity to partner with the Illinois Department of Labor in such a unique and transformative way. This initiative centering the voices and expertise of women workers, particularly low-paid women of color, is directly aligned with our strategic focus, and we believe it will strengthen Illinois’ capacity to enforce pay equity and other employment protections, thus helping realize the intended outcomes of legislative action, inform enforcement strategies and more proactive investigations, and advance gender and racial equity statewide,” said **President and CEO of Women Employed Cherita Ellens**.

The mission of Women Employed is to improve the economic status of women and remove barriers to economic equity. The non-profit is also working to close the wealth gap at the intersection of race and gender. For more information, click here [Women Employed](#).

IDOL promotes and protects the rights, wages, welfare, working conditions, safety and health of workers, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, color or sexual orientation. To learn more about IDOL, click here [About IDOL](#).

In compliance with the Stevens Amendment the Illinois Department of Labor’s Partnering to Promote Pay Equity and Transparency in Illinois Initiative is fully funded by one federal grant, the FARE grant.

###