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Assessing Gaps in the System: Girls' Careers and the Transition to Adulthood

Dickinson, ND – Are young women prepared with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to succeed in the workforce? Do they have the tools to enter post-secondary education and to contribute positively in their communities? Women Empowering Women is kicking off a study to assess if young women in Dickinson feel prepared for success and ready for adulthood. Young women have new opportunities in this economically rich region. Whether it is multiple career choices, entrepreneurial choices, or where to live, this study intends to better understand how young women are transitioning into adulthood. This study will research available resources, opportunities, networks of support, and experiences. In focusing on post-high school readiness, the study will assess if there are gaps in community efforts to prepare young women for success.

The overarching ideal driving this study is to identify structural or systemic gaps that may be attributed to socioeconomic factors, such as poverty or factors such as limited access to cultural capital. This study will also observe if there are opportunity gaps related to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity.

With generous funding from Change Network, an initiative of the Bush Foundation, our study focuses on understanding the current systems directly influencing and informing high school-aged girls. Interviews are structured to capture an understanding of contemporary issues, what is working, where gaps exist, and to generate solutions-based ideas.

Change Network, which is awarding a \$5,000 grant to implement the study, provides North Dakotans, South Dakotans and the region's 12 Native Nations with a supportive learning environment to lead more equitable and inclusive change within their organizations and

communities. Leading the project is Women Empowering Women President Ray Ann Kilen, a member of the 2019-2020 North Dakota Change Network. Women Empowering Women is a non-profit volunteer organization of individuals organized to support women as they strive for excellence in life, encourage the betterment of women, build stronger communities, as well as foster women's needs in the community. To learn more about Women Empowering Women go to www.wewnetwork.org.

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