



## Pennsylvania Women Work (PA Women Work) and New Choices:

### An Impact Beyond Job Training

#### Abuse

- Twenty-five percent of workplace problems, such as absenteeism, lower productivity, high turnover and excessive medical benefits and leave, are due to abuse.
- Fifty-six percent of abused women are late to work five times a month.
- Researchers estimate that as many as 60 percent of victims of abuse lose their jobs for reasons stemming from abuse.
  - PA Women Work and the New Choices program have served numerous individuals who have lost their jobs because of abuse.
  - Many of these women have been isolated from friends and family by their abusive partners.
  - One graduate of the Pittsburgh New Choices career development program told PA Women Work staff that she felt as though her New Choices instructors and classmates were the closest thing she had to a family because she had lost touch with her relatives through her husband's controlling behavior.
  - Statistics taken from The Coalition Against Domestic Violence

#### Homelessness

- Increased homelessness is directly related to stagnant and falling incomes and the increase in insecure jobs with fewer benefits.
- Most at-risk for homelessness are minimum wage workers, especially women.
  - 79 percent of minimum wage workers are 20 years of age or older.
  - The majority of these minimum wage workers are single mothers.
- Forty-four percent of homeless individuals are working full-time hours at minimum wage jobs.
- These individuals—working full time but still experiencing homelessness—face barriers to better job opportunities such as a lack of reliable transportation and reduced access to education.
- According to The National Coalition for the Homeless: “Mainstream programs...may meet some of the basic needs of some homeless individuals but struggle to encourage employment.”
  - Many of the women in the New Choices program are currently experiencing or have experienced homelessness, largely due to income that is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

- The goal of New Choices is to get women into jobs with family-sustaining wages.
- One formerly homeless New Choices participant from Pittsburgh has said, “New Choices showed me a new path for myself and my daughter. The staff, instructors and program participants all helped me and continue to support me and give me hope. I know for certain that without them I would not make it. New Choices helped me regain my self-esteem and gave me the strength to set positive and realistic goals in my life.” This participant is now a student at the Community College of Allegheny County, where she is studying Early Education and Child Development.
- Statistics taken from the National Coalition for the Homeless

### Gender Equity in the Workplace

- Women earn, on average, 78 cents to every man’s dollar for the same work.
- According to a report by National Public Radio, women are hesitant to speak up about how they are treated in the workplace.
  - Women are less likely to discuss money with their co-workers.
  - Women are also less likely to ask for a raise.
- According to PROGRESS (The Program for Research and Outreach on Gender Equity in Society) at Carnegie Mellon University, many women do not know how to effectively negotiate for a raise or promotion.
  - The New Choices program teaches workplace communication and professionalism so that women know how to properly speak with supervisors about how they are treated in the workplace.
  - New Choices also encourages self-esteem building so that women in the program have the confidence necessary to ask for better pay or promotions.