



# Helping Our Branches In 2026

Revised 7-29-2025

# AAUW MN Helping Our Branches



- ◆ Message from AAUW MN President Kelsey Waits.....p. 1
- ◆ Strategic Plan Focus.....p. 2
  - Strategic Plan Actions Grants.....p. 3
  - Strategic Plan Action Grant Application.....p. 4
  - AAUW MN Strategic Plan for 2021-2026..... (p. 1–4)
- ◆ NCCWSL Grants 2026 ..... p. 5
- ◆ Young Women for Equity Awards 2026.....p. 6
  - Young Women for Equity Award-High School..... p. 7
  - Young Women for Equity Award-College.....p. 8
- ◆ Leader on Loan Information and Application.....p. 9
- ◆ Carol E. MacPherson Scholarships.....p. 10



## Helping Our Branches in 2026

As AAUW MN continues to address goals, actions, and implementations within the AAUW MN Strategic Plan for 2021-2026, we will use the process of defining its direction and use resources to pursue strategies such as those found in *Helping Our Branches*.

*Helping Our Branches* addresses resources and methods which will aide branches and provide pathways to achieve branch goals and objectives. By supporting our branches through grants, we assist branches with limited resources.

*Helping Our Branches* combines all AAUW MN resources & opportunities in one document. *Helping Our Branches* includes Strategic Plan Action Grants, information on NCCWSL, including what is NCCWSL, Young Women for Equity Awards for young women in high school and college, Leader on Loan, and contact information for the Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarships. Karen Reichensperger, VP Program, will Chair the Selection Committees for Strategic Plan Action Grants, NCCWSL Grants, and the Young Women for Equity Awards.

As Branches are awarded grant opportunities, AAUW MN encourages branch officers from around the state to meet via Zoom with the corresponding state board officer and share your experiences and outcomes.

Please use the opportunities in *Helping Our Branches in 2026* to achieve, at our branch, state, and the national levels, the ideals, goals, and mission of AAUW.

*Kelsey Waits*

AAUW MN President

aauwminn@gmail.com



## **A Focus on the AAUW MN Strategic Plan**

Strategic Planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy or direction and making decisions on the allocation of its resources to pursue the strategy.

Under the Leadership of Lisa West, past state president, a committee worked to develop, and the AAUW MN Board voted to accept the Strategic Plan for 2021-2026. The plan is closely aligned with the focus of AAUW National. The plan includes Education and Training, Economic Security, Leadership, and Governance and Sustainability. The four main areas of focus in the AAUW National Plan are applicable at the state level but are scaled to recognize inherent limitations in a state-wide realm verses a national influence.

The national goals and objectives within the four areas have been adopted by AAUW MN as the framework for its Strategic Plan. Some of these goals and objectives were modified to reflect state support for AAUW National goals and objectives. What is unique to the AAUW MN Strategic Plan is the Actions it will use to achieve the goals and objectives.

The AAUW MN Strategic Plan 2021-2026, allows branches a wide range of options to implement. The Strategic Plan provides a focus on both AAUW MN and AAUW National. AAUW MN is providing resources for Strategic Plan Action Grants to implement the goals of our state and national organization.



## 2026 Strategic Plan Action Grants

AAUW of MINNESOTA will award Strategic Plan Action Grants in 2026 to support branch projects/ programs/events that focus on the AAUW MN Strategic Plan. Actions are listed under each Goal in the plan. AAUW MN's Strategic Plan allows us to identify our strategies or direction and to make decisions on the allocation of our resources to pursue those strategies.

### How to apply for a Strategic Plan/Actions Grant...

**The Strategic Plan Action Grants Committee chaired by VP Program Karen Reichensperger will consider the following criteria in evaluating the grant application.** Has the branch...

1. Identified a main area in the Strategic Plan: Education, Economic Security, Leadership and Governance and Sustainability?
2. Identified the goal and objective used to apply for a Strategic Plan Action Grant?
3. Identified a correlation between branch project and the Actions goal and objectives?
4. Completed a written description of the branch project or event?
5. Identified the target audience?
6. Identified to what extent, if any, will there be collaboration with other branches or organization/s?
7. Identified the budget, including in kind donations?
8. Identified the criteria that will be used to access if your project or event is successful?
9. Identified the timeline?

### **Applications are due by March 10, 2026.**

Complete the application, 2026 Strategic Plan Action Grants on p. 4, and submit along with the above information to Teresa Sagen, AAUW MN Administrative Assistant, [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com)

Five grants of at least \$500.00 may be awarded. The dollar amount could be more, depending on the proposed project and the availability of funds. Recipients will be notified by March 31, 2026. AAUW MN anticipates that **branch projects/events will be completed by December 1, 2026.**

**Each branch that is awarded a grant is expected to write a short article about the grant, provide information about the evaluation results, and identify revenue and expenditures.** Please send information to Teresa Sagen. The information may be shared in *The Pine* and placed on the website. **Please do include pictures!**



## **2026 AAUW MN Branch Strategic Plan Action Grant Application**

### **AAUW'S MISSION TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY**

Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Branch Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information Email \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dollar Amount Requesting \_\_\_\_\_

Include the following in your application:

**The Strategic Plan Action Grant Committee, chaired by Karen Reichensperger, VP Program, will consider the following criteria in evaluating the grant application:**

- Identified a main area in the Strategic Plan: Education, Economic Security, Leadership and Governance and Sustainability
- Identified the goal and objective used to apply for a Strategic Plan Action Grant
- Identified a correlation between branch project and the Actions goal and objectives
- Completed a written description of your project or event
- Identified the target audience
- To what extent, if any, will there be collaboration with other branches or organizations
- Identified the budget, including in kind donations
- Identified the criteria that will be used to access if your project or event is successful
- Identified the timeline

**Application Due March 10, 2026.**

**Send to Teresa Sagen, AAUW MN Administrative Assistant**

**[tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com)**



Adopted by AAUW MN Board on July 17, 2021

## AAUW History and Background

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) was started in 1881 by 17 women college graduates who joined together to find greater opportunities to use their education and to open the door for other women to pursue higher education. The members represented a handful of women with college degrees at a time when their first efforts were devoted to things like countering then-perpetuated myths that a college education harms women's health and results in infertility. In 2018, AAUW was 170,000 members and supporters strong, with branches in every congressional district, state, and U.S. territory. AAUW has established a legacy over 138 years, across a range of issues that have advanced equity for women and girls. The 2018 AAUW National strategic plan focuses on moving forward, building on our work in three of our historical priority areas — education and training, economic security, and leadership.

### AAUW's Mission

– to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

### AAUW's Vision

– equity for all.

Four main macro areas of work:



Three of these focal areas are mission-based, and one — Governance and Sustainability — is foundational in AAUW National's ability to run the organization, with best practices, innovation, and strengthened fiscal sustainability.

Keeping our mission forefront will ensure we properly address the policy and advocacy work, the programs to develop and scale, and the operating model needed to ensure real impact.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

## AAUW of Minnesota History and Background

The AAUW of Minnesota (AAUW MN) formally organized in 1923 with a nucleus of eight branches of the organization formerly known as the Association of Collegiate Alumnae. The first of those branches, formed in 1889 by women from Minneapolis and St. Paul, was called the Minnesota Branch.

From the beginning, the aim “to unite alumnae of colleges and universities for practical education work” found expression at the local level in fundraising for fellowships. In the branches, members maintained an active interest in their communities, responding to discovered needs through youth work, welfare and other social service projects, and cultural programs. The business of the state organization is conducted at meetings of the Board of Directors and at the annual meeting or state convention. In 2020-2021, AAUW MN had 28 branches, 1,734+ members, and 18 AAUW College/University Partners.



The four main macro areas of focus in the AAUW National Strategic Plan are applicable at the state level, but must be scaled to recognize inherent limitations in a state-wide realm, versus a national influence.

The following are generally the AAUW National goals and objectives within each focus area that have been adopted by the AAUW MN as the framework for its Strategic Plan. Some of these goals and objectives were modified to reflect State level support for AAUW National goals and objectives. What is unique to the AAUW MN is the Actions it will use to achieve its goals and objectives.

## EDUCATION

### **Goal A: Champion equal access to all levels and fields of education.**

#### Objectives

1. Address barriers to success for girls and women through improved learning environments.

#### Actions

- a. Promote and utilize programs created by AAUW National.
- b. Promote scholarship opportunities for women (e.g., AAUW Fellowships; Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship).

2. Create educational pathways for all women and girls, especially those leading to high-earning careers.

#### Actions

- a. Continue to support Branch and State STEM initiatives and programs.



### **Goal B: Ensure education at every level is free from gender discrimination.**

#### Objectives

1. Protect and expand compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws.

#### Actions

- a. Utilize AAUW MN Public Policy Committee to track Minnesota legislation and inform membership.

## ECONOMIC SECURITY

### **Goal A: Achieve pay equity by 2030.**

#### Objectives

1. Champion pay equity federally and in all U.S. states and territories.

#### Actions

- a. Utilize AAUW MN Public Policy Committee to track Minnesota legislation and inform membership.

2. Lead the nation in providing salary negotiation programs for employees and employers.

#### Actions

- a. Collaborate with and support college/university representatives to offer 20 StartSmart and WorkSmart Training sessions by 2024.

### **Goal B: Create inclusive career pathways for women, free of systemic barriers and biases, to attain economic security.**

#### Objectives

1. Develop a blueprint for women to access careers, especially in high-paying fields.

#### Actions

- a. Establish a task force to develop a blueprint by 2024.

2. Support employers in advancing higher wage pathways for all women.

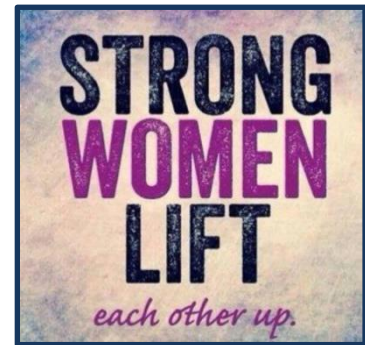
Actions

- a. Share a process for community/business commitment to equal pay.

3. Protect and expand compliance with Title VII and other federal civil rights statutes.

Actions

- a. Utilize AAUW MN Public Policy Committee to track legislation and compare it to current Minnesota Statutes.



**Goal C: Deepen women's retirement security and quality of life.**

Objectives

1. Address inequities regarding retirement for women at every socioeconomic level.
2. Help women in achieving their desired quality of life in preparation for possible retirement.

**LEADERSHIP**

**Goal A: Bolster the participation of girls and women in leadership roles throughout their lives.**

Objectives

1. Empower early and midcareer women to seek and succeed in leadership opportunities

Actions

- a. Provide leadership programming for women.
- b. Continue our support for women in leadership roles through the Women's Candidate Development Coalition.
- b. Collaborate with and support college/university representatives to offer 20 StartSmart and WorkSmart Training sessions by 2024.
- c. Continue AAUW MN scholarship support for the NCCWSL initiative.

2. Expand leadership opportunities for all AAUW MN members

Actions

- a. Develop a vibrant board and officer training program.
- b. Recruit AAUW MN members to be involved in scholarship selection opportunities (e.g., Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship)

**Goal B: Advance the number of women in leadership, particularly in education and non-profit organizations.**

Objectives

1. Increase the inclusion and numbers of women serving on governing and advisory boards.

Actions

- a. Increase AAUW MN member awareness of leadership opportunities (e.g., State and local advisory board and committees).
- b. Seek AAUW MN members to serve on the WoMN ACT ® Board. Previously known as the Minnesota Women's Consortium, WoMN Act is a coordinated network of individuals, organizations, and corporations advancing gender equity and social justice through advocacy and collaboration.
- c. Seek AAUW MN members to serve on Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship and other scholarship boards and committees.

2. Become a Minnesota resource on the impact of leadership development activities for the advancement of women into leadership roles.

## GOVERNANCE & SUSTAINABILITY

### Goal A: Implement best practices in governance, inclusion, and organizational functioning.

#### Objectives

1. Evaluate and competitively assess AAUW MN's governance model and ensure best practices in nonprofit board structure and service.

#### Actions

- a. Survey branches/members.

2. Embody the goals and spirit of inclusion, diversity, and intersectionality across all AAUW activities and participants.

#### Actions

- a. Increase AAUW MN Board diversity by \_\_\_% of voting members.

3. Modernize AAUW's technology infrastructure and build strategic, integrated, comprehensive, and forward-looking communications.

#### Actions

- a. Complete the AAUW MN website redesign by December 31, 2021.
- b. Explore electronic voting procedures.



### Goal B: Enhance financial sustainability by increasing and diversifying revenue.

#### Objectives

1. Explore a comprehensive campaign to increase and diversify membership.

#### Actions

- a. Increase membership by \_\_\_% Statewide.
- b. Develop organization information that helps perspective members understand AAUW as an organization and the benefits of membership.
- c. Develop diverse project/program opportunities that are equitable and inclusive.

2. Engage new audiences, increase donor populations, and achieve greater impact through partnerships.

#### Actions

- a. Explore commonalities that we have with other organizations that align with AAUW's Mission.
- b. Explore opportunities within AAUW's Mission to partner with other organizations.
- c. Explore donor opportunities to support AAUW MN projects and programs.





## **National Conference for College Women Student Leaders 2026**

### **What is NCCWSL? ...and what are NCCWSL Grants?**

NASPA (National Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) along with AAUW invites hundreds of college women from around the country for two days of leadership training, inspiration and networking at the National Conference of College Women Student Leaders aka NCCWSL! The acronym is pronounced 'Nick-Whistle'.

The conference provides a transformative experience for college attendees, preparing, challenging, empowering, and inspiring them to be the next generation of leaders. The skill-building workshops, panels, speakers and activities provide endless opportunities to learn from the experts and make life-long connections. Past conferences have been held the last weekend in May at the University of Maryland, College Park. NCCWSL is now managed by NASPA with input from AAUW. Please stay tuned for dates, time, location and registration information. Watch for updates on AAUW of Minnesota's website, or at <https://www.naspa.org/> or <https://aauw-mn.aauw.net>

AAUW of Minnesota is offering \$1000.00 grants to 10 branches (one grant per branch) that send a college student to NCCWSL. Should a virtual conference be held, grant amounts will be adjusted based upon registration fees.

The deadline to apply for NCCWSL grant monies is February 15, 2026. Send an email about your intention to send a student to [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com). The 10 NCCWSL grants will be on a first come, first serve basis so it is important to send your email with your intention to send a student early.

After we hear from branches requesting scholarship monies, we will confirm acceptance of your request no later than February 16. To receive your grant, you must send a copy of the student's completed NCCWSL registration to [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com) who will complete an RFP with a check payable to your branch. If after receiving your grant money, your sponsored student decides not to attend as planned, the grant money should be returned to AAUW of Minnesota.

- If your branch has never sent a student to NCCWSL, head to the AAUW MN website to find resources and sample documents to help navigate your branch through the process of sending a student to NCCWSL and applying for a grant: <https://aauw-mn.aauw.net> Click **BRANCH GRANTS/AWARDS**
- Branches and students are responsible for making transportation plans. We will, however, try to provide a list of participating branches if you wish to contact them and help students coordinate travel.

Please email Karen Reichensperger, [klmncic@frontiernet.net](mailto:klmncic@frontiernet.net) or Teresa Sagen, [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com) with questions.



## **AAUW MN Young Women for Equity 2026**

**Applications due on, or before March 31, 2026**

**Two awards are available:**

**A young woman in high school is awarded \$500.00**

**A young woman in college (up to age 25) is awarded \$1,000.00**

The criteria for this award:

- \* The project or activity specifically addresses equity issues of women and girls.
- \* The nominee must exhibit leadership that reflects the AAUW Mission.
- \* There must be evidence of the impact of the action or event.
- \* Measurable outcomes should be identified. This could include such things as— number of girls or women served, results of the event that impacted women or girls, statistical measures of success, or 'before or after' stories of women or girls benefiting from the action.

**Nominations must be made by a branch member and include responses to the above criteria and information requested from the nominee. Applications by students will not be accepted.**

**Nomination due date is March 31, 2026. A panel of AAUW members, chaired by Karen Reichensperger, VP Program, will select the recipient.**

Branches are asked to promote these awards by sharing information, talking to high school counselors, C/U reps, or by providing information to the financial aid department. Recipients can consult with the branch regarding the criteria but must complete the application themselves.

The recipients of this award will be announced at the AAUW MN State Meeting. Recipients will be invited to the luncheon along with one other person as a guest of AAUW MN. If a recipient is unable to attend, her nominator or a branch member may accept the award on her behalf.

PLEASE NOTE: We do not judge nominations by lengthy lists of all accomplishments, organizations, and projects an individual has been involved in. We are looking for projects or events that specifically address equity issues related to women and girls. We are specifically interested in the leadership roles that the nominees played in these projects or events.

**Branch Nominations for 2026 should be sent to Teresa Sagen, AAUW MN Administrative Assistant, [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com) on or before March 31, 2026.**



## **Nomination for 2026 AAUW MN Young Women for Equity Award High School Student, \$500.00**

### **AAUW Mission Statement**

**Advancing equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.**

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_  
Nominee Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Nominee Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Nominee Contact Email \_\_\_\_\_

Justification for award based on required criteria:

1. Briefly describe the event or activity
2. Leadership role played by the nominee (Please be specific)
3. How the event or activity reflects the AAUW Mission
4. Evidence of impact of the event or activity

Nomination made by AAUW member: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's branch \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's phone and email Information \_\_\_\_\_

**The nomination form and required criteria are due on or before March 31, 2026. Send to Teresa Sagen, AAUW MN Administrative Assistant, at [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com)**

**Nominations will be evaluated by a selection committee chaired by Karen Reichensperger, VP Program.**



## **Nomination for 2026 AAUW MN Young Women for Equity Award College Student, \$1000.00**

### **AAUW Mission Statement**

**Advancing equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.**

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Contact Email \_\_\_\_\_

Justification for award based on required criteria:

1. Briefly describe the event or activity
2. Leadership role played by the nominee (Please be specific)
3. How the event or activity reflects the AAUW Mission
4. Evidence of impact of the event or activity

Nomination made by AAUW member \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's branch \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's phone and email Information \_\_\_\_\_

**The nomination form and required criteria are due on or before March 31, 2026. Send to Teresa Sagen, AAUW MN Administrative Assistant, at [thsagen@gmail.com](mailto:thsagen@gmail.com)**

**Nominations will be evaluated by a selection committee chaired by Karen Reichensperger, VP Program.**





## Leader on Loan Program

The AAUW of Minnesota Leader on Loan program provides branches the opportunity to have a board member, team of state leaders, or teams of past leaders, provide branch support and/or branch programming. AAUW MN will cover the leader's transportation. The host branch is responsible for any meals or overnight accommodations, if necessary. An application should be submitted to the state president. Final approval is by the state president. Branches may request a specific person, but the final decision will be based on topic expertise, availability and proximity to the host branch.

### AAUW MN Leader on Loan Application

**Leader or Topic Requested** \_\_\_\_\_

Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of the Visit \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Event or Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Expected attendance \_\_\_\_\_ Will other branches be invited? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please list \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose or Goal of the Meeting or Event \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Role of the Leader requested - presenter or facilitator \_\_\_\_\_

Send Request to AAUW MN State President

Kelsey Waits

[aauwminn@gmail.com](mailto:aauwminn@gmail.com)



*Help spread the word about ...*

*Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarships!*



AAUW of Minnesota made a new connection by teaming up with the Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship (CEM). CEM is a private family scholarship, established in 1975, that provides scholarships to Minnesota women who have a five-year or longer accumulative gap in their post-secondary education, and are seeking an undergraduate or graduate degree (full time or half time) from a Minnesota higher education institution.

The CEM is administered in partnership with AAUW MN. For more information on the CEM, check out the website at: <https://www.cemscholarship.org/>. The Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship was established to assist women who, like Carol, are seekers. It memorializes Carol's undying concern for fairness, for providing opportunities for women to find new paths, for the value of a thinking mind to ask difficult questions, and for respecting the nurturing roles women continue to play even as they take on various new responsibilities in their families and communities. Carol would be pleased to learn of the extraordinary accomplishments of Macpherson scholarship seekers and would applaud the adversities they overcome to pursue education and a better life.

**CELEBRATING ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, THE FUND HAS PROVIDED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR OVER 500 WOMEN WITH A 100% GRADUATION RATE.**

**Scholarship application for academic year 2025-26 is now closed. Application for academic year 2026-27 will be available in early 2025. Applications are usually due by July 31 of each year for the following academic year.**