

Background

The Women's Economic Power (WEP) initiative was launched in 2022. We aim to dismantle the systemic barriers faced by immigrant women of color — including transgender women and gender nonconforming persons — to realize their economic power.



Our community sits at the intersection of multiple identities that can disadvantage them, such as color, gender, and status. These systemic barriers limit their ability to assume leadership roles, influence decision-making, and generate wealth. We see the impact of these intersections on the wage gap. For example, in the U.S., the racial and gender wage gaps are profound and impact immigrant women of color across all industries. White women employed full-time, year-round, are paid 83 cents for every dollar paid to a white man. Immigrant women earn 75 cents, Black women earn 61 cents, Latina women earn 53 cents, and Indigenous women earn approximately 51 cents for each dollar men earn.

If Black women could earn the equivalent of the same work as a white man's dollar, they could afford two years of college tuition or 2 1/2 years of childcare. The combination of gender and color discrimination doubly hurts immigrant women of color. As the leading U.S. entity working with immigrant, refugee, and asylee professionals, 60% of whom identify as people of color and 50% who come from refugee backgrounds, Upwardly Global is uniquely positioned to support this community in rebuilding their lives and livelihoods in their newly adopted home. Our WEP strategy aims to eliminate barriers to workforce services (i.e., our program work — we recognize that because women face additional barriers, our programs must be designed to address

those barriers), revise policies to enable greater access to pay equity and employment (i.e., our policy work), and shift the narrative around women's contributions to advance gender equity. As Upwardly Global continues to shape and transform the immigrant workforce sector, we seek to create a home for immigrant women of various socioeconomic backgrounds to connect them across industry and occupation, as gendered barriers impact all of them.

The WEP initiative is supported by Pivotal Ventures. We believe this work can only be advanced in partnership, such as with sister organizations like Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), which brings an immigrant- and gender-focused lens to inclusion.

Approach:

Upwardly Global's three-pronged approach includes workforce development, policy change, and narrative shift, enabling us to tackle the challenges immigrant women and immigrant women of color face.

Intersectionality: In our efforts to take a holistic approach to address the complex issues immigrant women of color face while advancing discussions around racial, gender, and economic justice, we center intersectionality as a value to keeping us grounded in these efforts.



WEP Pillars:

- 1 Workforce Development:** Upwardly Global has a successful track record of building and enhancing the skills of professional immigrants, including immigrant women, resulting in an average income gain of \$50,000 per year.
- 2 Policy Change:** Through our policy work, we have established strong networks with employers, government agencies, and workforce partners and achieved a number of policy successes both at the federal and state levels.
- 3 Paradigm Shift:** Engage with coalitions, stakeholders, and leaders to advance immigrant women's economic power.

Three-Year Objectives:

- 1. Workforce Development:** By centering our programming on women, we aim to support their economic advancement by helping them secure the relevant training, coaching, and connections needed to compete for thriving-wage jobs and professional careers. This will enable us to equip the workforce sector to follow suit through our lessons learned.

Our focus areas are:

- Achieve gender parity in obtaining thriving-wage jobs and eliminate the gender wage gap for immigrant women program participants.
- Enhance financial fluency and inclusion among immigrant and refugee women job seekers.
- Build women-only spaces to strengthen peer-to-peer support.
- Increase participation and completion of Upwardly Global programs among women job seekers.
- Improve employer partner competency regarding immigrant and refugee women's preferences and employment barriers.
- Adopt a gender lens across all of Upwardly Global's programs.

- 2. Policy Change:** There is a lack of policies focused on immigrant women. Upwardly Global's approach to family-oriented policies is grounded in advancing dual carers and earners, recognizing the intersections of parental leave, childcare, and employment protections to improve women's economic choices. It also considers the multiple family-caregiving roles immigrant women play in the household.

Upwardly Global has cultivated and activated a strong network of workforce partners, employers, and local and national government actors in the past two decades. We are uniquely positioned to bring an immigrant and gender lens to the policy discussions at the federal level. Currently, we advise the White House Task Force for New Americans and the White House-led employment working group for Safety Mobility Offices.

Policy Change (Continued)

Below are our focus areas:

- Advance federal policies addressing systemic barriers to immigrant and refugee women's success, such as the gender wage gap and childcare access.
- Establish networks supporting immigrant and refugee women in the workforce at local and state levels.

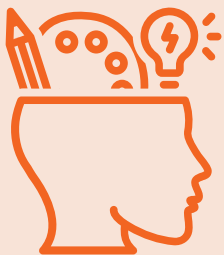
3.

Paradigm Shift: There are often biased and harmful assumptions about immigrant women's contributions and value. We aim to shift those narratives about our community and equip the workforce sector with the know-how to better understand immigrant women and the barriers that lock them out of opportunity. Our focus areas are:

- Contribute to platforms amplifying the economic justice advocacy work of immigrant women of color.
- Support narrative change initiatives and partnerships.
- Conduct a landscape analysis of gender perspectives in media and film.

Upwardly Global's Impact Data on Women in 2022:**1,045 Women Served**

Each participant completed training that prepared them to effectively and confidently navigate their first professional job search in the U.S. Enrollees additionally received industry-specific, one-on-one coaching to help them map their unique career path in the U.S. and understand how to effectively translate their international credentials, education, and experience into their desired profession in their new home.

**589 Re/Upskilled**

589 women in the program additionally reskilled or upskilled, earning industry-relevant skills, credentials, and certifications that enhance their employability in technical fields. Popular training areas include data science, project management, clinical research coordination, UX/UI, cloud computing, IT support, and data analytics.

**453 Found Their First Professional Role in the U.S.**

We empowered 453 women to transition from underemployment into skill-aligned, professional roles commensurate with their international skills, education, and long-term career aspirations. Those who found employment through our program earn an average starting salary of \$63,000, representing an average wage gain of nearly \$58,000.