



223 Page Street, Toledo, OH 43620, phone 419-241-9789

Web www.womenblessingwomen.org

Women Blessing Women Facts

Women Blessing Women is a 501©3 nonprofit organization for women age 18 and over dedicated to empowering women living in poverty to achieve success, gain confidence and obtain living wage jobs. There is no fee charged for the organization's services. The organization serves all women without regard to ethnic background, race or religion.

Mission Statement – To serve, bless and empower women to achieve their potential, to obtain living wage jobs and to break the cycle of poverty.

History – Founded in 1998 by the Women Religious of the Catholic Diocese of Toledo, the program at first served women and children from Aurora House, Bethany House, Sparrow's Nest and Project Mustard Seed shelters. A director was hired, and the program grew rapidly, opening its own site on Lagrange St. in 2000, thanks to a three-year grant. Women Blessing Women moved to 223 Page St. in 2003, a setting that is home-like, warm and peaceful. In 2005 the G.E.D, Job Education and the spiritual retreat programs, along with the empowerment workshops were merged into a new, more effective comprehensive empowerment program. 2008 was a year of growth; a record number (441) of women were served, and an endowment fund was established to provide for future needs.

The Employment Program – Women Blessing Women provides a comprehensive basic job, education and empowerment skills training through tutoring, mentoring and group sessions. The program addresses the root causes of poverty: lack of a high school or GED education, lack of job readiness and job skills, and lack of positive job behaviors. The program includes but is not limited to:

- Job search
- Job preparation
- Career/education assessment testing
- Job skills
- Work ethics
- Computer skills
- Telephone and office equipment skills
- G.E.D. (General Education Diploma)
- Learning positive behaviors
- Problem solving skills
- Relationship skills
- Communication skills
- Conflict resolution
- Adapting to change/transitioning
- Money management/ fiscal responsibility
- Self-esteem/self confidence
- Stress/anxiety reduction
- Goal setting
- Spiritual retreats
- Unpaid work experience

Funding – Women Blessing Women is funded by individual, corporate, church/parish donations, grants, contracts and fundraising.

Volunteers – Volunteers are the heart of the employment program. They serve as instructors, tutors, coaches, mentors, leaders, board and committee members, financial, administrative and marketing consultants. In 2008, 227 volunteers gave 11,582 hours of service

Employment Program Statistics – During 2008 the program served 441 women. Of those women, 23 earned their G.E.D., and 34 percent advanced their grade level, 14 entered college, 2 passed STNA (state tested nursing assistant) exam and 29 percent obtained jobs.

The Need for Employment Services – Recent statistics show that there is an overwhelming need in the Toledo area to assist women and their children to break the cycle of poverty:

- Toledo is the 40th poorest city among the USA's 70 poorest cities. Only Cleveland in the state of Ohio is poorer. --US census 2006
- Toledo ranks eighth among the 200 biggest metro areas that have the highest number of children living in poverty. --US census 2006. (These children have mothers who also are living in poverty.)
- Toledo ranks highest in the state for the last five out of six years in teenage pregnancies. Toledo has been #1 or #2 with the number of teenage pregnancies for the last 4 decades. --US Census
- Children whose parent/s are unemployed and who dropped out of school before completing high school are five times more likely to drop out themselves before graduating. --National Center on Literacy
- 65 percent of female heads of households have not graduated from high school and are living in poverty. --US census 2005

No high school diploma, teenage pregnancy/mom, welfare participant, generational poor are all measurement predictors to poverty.

Profile of the Average Participant

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| • 27 years old | Race |
| • Living in poverty | 69% African American |
| • Head of household | 17% White |
| • Mother of 2 children | 9% Hispanic |
| • Lives in Toledo Zip codes 43608, 43604, 43620 | 4% Native American |
| • Dropped out of school in the tenth grade | 1% Asian |
| • Tests at the seventh grade level | |
| • Pregnant as a teen | |
| • Lacks self-esteem/confidence | |
| • Mentally, physically and/or sexually abused | |
| • Little or no job experience | |
| • Income at or below the poverty level | |

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