



## **TASKFORCE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

### **HOUSE MEMORIAL 1 FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES FOR NEW MEXICO WOMEN AND FAMILIES**

## ***INTERIM REPORT***

*Printed October 2011*

# **House Memorial 1**

## **Rep. Danice Picraux**

### **Objectives**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the University of New Mexico's bureau of business and economic research be requested to convene a task force to define family-friendly policies and practices and to study policy options related to paid maternity leave, paid time off, part-time employee benefits, policy incentives for family-friendly small businesses, employment-based child care and other issues that will improve the health of women and families by addressing economic security.

# Task Force Members

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The Task Force met monthly from June-September 2011.

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## Goals for Year 1- 2011

1. Define family-friendly employer policies.
2. Examine benefits of individual policies to workers and their families and to the larger community.
3. Give careful consideration to the costs and benefits of policies to employers.
4. Explore options for instituting an award program for employers who implement family-friendly policies.

# Definition of Family-Friendly Employer Policies

Family-Friendly Employers (FFE) acknowledge and respond to the work and personal/family responsibilities of employees by developing and implementing policies and practices that allow employees to balance work and personal/family responsibilities effectively. Family-Friendly Policies and Practices (FFPPs) include but are not limited to:

- Personal, Family and Parental Leave
- Maternity/Paternity Leave and Lactation Programs
- Childcare/Eldercare/Dependent Care
- Flexible Scheduling
- Telecommuting
- Job Sharing and Part-Time Options
- Healthcare
- Wellness Programs
- Higher than Average Wages within an Industry
- Asset Building and Retirement Programs
- Training and Advancement Opportunities

FFPPs benefit both employees and employers. They positively impact the health, education, economic stability and job satisfaction of employees and their families while increasing sales, share value, and productivity and lowering costs by reducing absenteeism, turnover, and health-related expenses for employers.

# Overall Conclusions

This has been the deepest and longest recession in the Post World War II period. New Mexico employment declined by 4.1% in 2009 and by a further 1.1% in 2010, with overall job losses peak to trough in the neighborhood of 50,000. Thousands remain out of work.

Women workers now comprise roughly 50% of total nonfarm employment in the US, and a child today is as likely to have a working mother as a working father. In NM in 2010, about 60% of children under 6 had all parents in the labor force.

Yet few employers have made efforts to accommodate the family responsibilities of today's workforce. The one significant federal law, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), gives parents job protected rights to take off time before and after the birth of a child and keep their health insurance. Unfortunately, the law only applies where the employer has 50 or more employees. And the leave is unpaid and cannot exceed 12 weeks per year.

The benefits to employees and their families and the larger community of adopting family friendly policies are numerous and the effects far-reaching. Interestingly, employers may have much to gain as well – in increased productivity, lower costs, increased sales and higher share value.

# The NM labor market: Considerations for family-friendly policies

1. Many people in rural areas live far away from their places of employment, requiring approaches to this issue that recognize the effects of commuting time and distance on employees and employers.
2. Many of the occupations that comprise the greatest percentage of employment and that are expected to grow in the future in the state are/will be those with lower wages and expected skill levels. For example, Occupation Codes 350000 and 390000 (food preparation and serving related occupations; personal care and service occupations) have high levels of employment (71,610 and 33,080 respectively) and low median wages (\$9.55 and \$10.27 respectively).

# Profitability of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace

In today's economy, employers everywhere are looking for ways to save money and boost their bottom lines. In New Mexico, many employers have laid off employees or reduced their hours. Simultaneously, the need to remain competitive has meant maintaining or even increasing operations. As a result, everyone has been forced to accomplish more with less. But even before the economic downturn, U.S. employers were spending an average of \$300 billion in lost productivity, recruitment and retraining costs each year. This makes the cost-effectiveness of employee retention, efficiency and productivity an urgent matter.

With examples of small and large employers from a variety of industries that employ both high and low-skilled workers, the attached matrix demonstrates real strategies for boosting the bottom line through increased sales, share value, productivity and reduced costs.

# Social Outcomes of Family Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace

For workers in all industries and income levels, striking a balance between their work and personal/family responsibilities is extremely important. Whether an employee is raising a family, caring for aging or sick family members, or attending to his or her own personal needs, the ability to achieve work-life balance is both challenging and vital in ensuring productivity in the workplace and well-being in the home. Considering the health, education, and economic outcomes that are linked to work-life balance, employers play a pivotal role in the lives of their employees and in society at large.

Highlighting examples of Family Friendly Policies and Practices, the attached matrix demonstrates the impact these have on both on families and communities.

# Family-Friendly Business Awards

Awards for companies that have family-friendly policies can impact the award recipients and their employees, as well as entire communities.

- Companies recognized with awards gain stature and can use their award status in recruiting and marketing.
- When they do so, employees and other companies are educated to the advantages of family-friendly workplaces.
- Award recipients can experience a competitive advantage in recruiting.

Family-friendly workplace awards are given by governments, business organizations, civic clubs, foundations and other groups all over the country.

Their criteria typically include items such as:

- Flexible work schedules, including job sharing and telecommuting
- Health insurance and wellness programs
- Paid vacations and sick leave
- Employee growth and development
- Profit sharing and 401k retirement planning

Expanded programs may also offer child care and elder care benefits, lactation programs, employee growth and development.

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## Goals for Year 2- 2012

1. Undertake labor market analysis to inform policy recommendations.
2. Develop awards program.
3. Develop set of policy recommendations.

# Acknowledgements

## Facilitation and Logistics:

Giovanna Rossi Pressley, President, Collective Action Strategies, LLC

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## Printing:

UNM Anderson School of Management

## Meeting Space:

Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau

Southwest Creations Collaborative

*This report was funded in part by the McCune Charitable Foundation.*

*UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research contributed staff time.*

# Attachments

- House Memorial 1
- Profitability of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace
- Social Outcomes of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace
- Low Wage Occupations - New Mexico Statewide