



2022 Legislative Wrap-Up

This year, WFSA embarked on an ambitious legislative agenda to ensure Arizona women and girls have all the economic and social supports they need to be self-sufficient, achieve economic independence, and thrive. In the 2022 legislative session, the legislature passed a handful of policies to create and expand programs to support women and their families across the state. However, like the rest of the nation, Arizona was a battleground that resulted in legislation limiting people's bodily autonomy and threats against individuals' identities. We would be remiss not to mention this and how it will affect future advocacy efforts in the years to come.

In addition, legislators on both sides of the aisle collaborated on a historic budget for FY23 which was signed by Governor Ducey. [Here](#) is a link to the final budget spreadsheet. The general appropriations bill, which has the budget for each state agency, can be found [here](#). Both of these documents will be referenced throughout our legislative wrap-up.

Big Wins for Arizona Families

Healthy Families Arizona Secured Additional Essential Funding. Healthy Families Arizona (HFAz) is a voluntary home-visiting program that engages with high-risk mothers and their families to prevent child abuse and neglect. The program provides supportive services, including, but not limited to, emotional support, parent-child engagement, development screenings, and postpartum support and education. Nearly 100% of all families participating in this program have no reports of abuse or neglect after participating in the program. More than 20% of mothers gained employment while in the program, with a majority obtaining full-time employment. In addition, over 20% of mothers completed additional education during the first year of their child's life. The program was restored ongoing funding from the state's general budget with allocations of \$10 million for this fiscal year, \$12.5 million for 2024, and \$15 million for 2025. This allocation increases the capacity to serve 5,500 families for the current fiscal year which is an increase of **1,500 additional families from the previous year**. This includes expanding service areas to support rural communities (Governors budget recommendation). WFSA would like to thank the coalition of supporters who helped advance this legislative priority, including the Arizona Department of Child Safety, Children's Action Alliance, First Things First, and Southwest Human Development. We would also like to thank the Ducey administration for including HFAz in their Executive Budget Recommendation, and Representative Walt Blackman for working with us to sponsor the initial bill.

Postpartum Coverage Expanded. Before this legislative session, AHCCCS Postpartum Coverage only covered people for 60 days following the birth of their child— this is not enough time, as serious health concerns can occur up to one year after birth. With a \$2.7 million budget allocation and subject to federal approval, AHCCCS will expand postpartum coverage from 60 days to a full year after delivery. WFSA was happy to be part of a large coalition of stakeholders advocating for this change. Congratulations and thank you to Children's Action Alliance, Dignity Health, March of Dimes, and The American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, among many others, for their advocacy efforts.

Expanding AHCCCS postpartum coverage for women is an essential step toward prioritizing and protecting the health of women in Arizona.

Celebrating Other Successes From This Legislative Session

HB 2274 increases financial support to kinship caregivers (family caregivers). Currently, kinship caregivers do not receive the same financial support as foster parents. With the passage of HB 2274, the Arizona state general fund will allocate \$24.2 million to provide kinship caregivers with a monthly stipend of \$300, up from a previous amount of \$75.

HB 2122 establishes the Continuing High School and Workforce Training Program, Adult Workforce Diploma Program, and Community College Adult Education Workforce Development Program. It also creates the Workforce Diploma Program Fund and Community College Program Fund and appropriates \$6,000,000 from the state General Fund from 2023 to 2025. Adult education and workforce programs benefit the state and the Arizona workforce. These programs add to the overall well-being, health, and economic mobility of those that have the opportunity to participate in these programs.

HB 2679 modified the definition of an employer within the Arizona civil rights statute to support safer workplaces. The employer definition changes and enforces anti-discrimination laws regarding employment practices, including sexual harassment, to employers with one or more employees.

HB 2709 adds exceptions to when a domestic violence victim's information must be redacted from criminal case records to speed up their legal process. While the positive impact is evident, intending to increase efficiency in the legal system, WFSA holds concerns that this legislation may add an undue burden on victims that may have to justify why their personal information should be redacted.

There Is More Work to Be Done

Reproductive Rights

This session's wins are significant, and we are happy for the positive effect they will have on thousands of women and families in Arizona, our excitement is tempered due to other legislation that passed and the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v Wade*. While the supports we've been pushing for are essential to the economic self-sufficiency of women, now that women in Arizona will not have access to abortion resources, this progress is a drop in the bucket of what is likely to be needed.

As advocates for women and girls, we believe few things are more fundamental to our personhood and economic well-being than the choice as to how and when to start a family. Unplanned childbearing is associated with higher rates of poverty, less family stability, and worse outcomes for children. Given the importance of reproductive rights we wanted to highlight the harmful legislation signed by the Governor this legislative session:

SB 1164 Prohibits a physician from performing an abortion, except in a medical emergency when the gestational age exceeds 15 weeks. This does not make exceptions for situations including rape or incest.

LGBTQ+ Rights

Additionally, there were multiple measures in this legislative session that directly impacted the LGBTQ community in Arizona, specifically transgender youth, that we believe are essential to note. It is widely understood that transgender youth experience alarmingly high rates of depression, PTSD, and risk of suicide. Accordingly, WFSA has concerns with any public policy that could adversely impact or otherwise exclude individuals within the transgender community, similar to those bills enacted this session.

SB 1138 Prohibits a physician from providing irreversible gender reassignment surgery to a minor, effective March 31, 2023. Within the LGBTQ+ community, the legislation has been interpreted as a means to prevent transgender minors from receiving surgery that affirms their physical appearance with their emotional and psychological identity.

SB 1165 Directs public and certain private schools to designate their interscholastic athletics teams based on the biological sex of the participating students. The policy establishes civil liability for violators. This legislation prohibits transgender youth from participating in sports with their identified gender. Those within the LGBTQ+ community also interpret this legislation as potentially exposing transgender youth to additional discrimination in sports.

Legislation That Didn't Pass

While passing practical legislation like HB 2679, which protects women who have experienced workplace sexual harassment, the 2022 Arizona State Legislature failed to pass several bills that would continue to expand safety and economic benefits for women across the state. This includes;

HB 2534, a bill that would have ended the state sales tax on feminine hygiene products as well as diapers, did not receive a committee hearing this session. This leaves women and girls with no option but to continue to pay state sales tax on hygiene items that are essential.

SB 1216 aimed to increase the duration of an order of protection from only one year to two years.

SB 1626 would have required all Arizona universities and community colleges to create an on-campus sexual misconduct task force and establish reporting requirements for all universities and colleges.

SB 1217 intended to increase the duration of an emergency order of protection to seven days.

SB 1215 aimed to reestablish the study committee on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples that was enacted in 2019 and was repealed in 2021 without a successful renewal.

WFSA continues to join the fight for an equitable Arizona. **To be informed on WFSA's active legislative priorities and how you can get involved with the advocacy team, please visit womensgiving.org/advocacy.**