



## **The Pathways Advancing Career Training (PACT) Act: Helping Families**

An alarming 42 percent of all children in female-headed households live in poverty.<sup>1</sup> The PACT Act supports targeted programs for women raising families on their own – providing specialized services to help them overcome barriers to employment and move into high-wage, high-growth jobs in fields where women are often underrepresented. In doing so, PACT will increase family income and improve economic security for hundreds of thousands of women and children across the country.

### **The PACT Act targets families most in need of a hand up: female-headed families.**

- An astounding 60 percent of poor children (7.4 million) live in female-headed households.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 7 million widowed, separated, or divorced displaced homemakers in the United States face barriers to entering or re-entering the workforce due to extended periods of time spent caring for family members. In 2003, 42 percent of displaced homemakers had incomes below the poverty level.<sup>3</sup>
- Of the 14 million single mothers in the United States, 37 percent live below the poverty line and another 17 percent are near poor.<sup>4</sup>

### **The PACT Act raises families' incomes and increases their long-term economic security by giving women access to the services they need to enter higher-paying jobs.**

- Single parents and displaced homemakers have unique and sometimes complex employment and training needs that are not being met by existing workforce development programs. The PACT Act helps women address these barriers head-on by supporting the holistic delivery of specialized services so often unavailable under our current job training system – from self-sufficiency planning and personal counseling, to child care and other supports.
- At the same time, PACT trains women to enter non-traditional fields, in which they can earn an average of 20 to 30 percent more than their counterparts in traditionally “female” fields.<sup>5</sup>
- PACT supports and replicates programs proven to increase family income, such as the CLIMB Wyoming program for single mothers, where graduates consistently double or triple their monthly wage income.<sup>6</sup>

### **PACT helps families break the cycle of poverty. When parents improve their skills and jobs, their children benefit not only from increased family income, but also in a multitude of other ways.**

- Children whose families leave poverty are less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to attend college. Research shows that the higher a family's income, the better the children will perform on ability measures and achievement tests, and the more likely they are to finish high school.<sup>7</sup>
- Children and adolescents who do not grow up in poverty are at a lower risk for negative cognitive and academic outcomes, behavioral problems such as aggression, and emotional problems.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, their chances of achieving greater physical and psychological well-being as adults increase.<sup>9</sup>
- Higher levels of a mothers' educational attainment are positively correlated to higher economic productivity, better health care, healthier children, lower fertility rates, better development of children's literacy skills, increased participation in children's schooling, and higher academic achievement by children.<sup>10</sup>

- Parents serve as role models for their children and therefore, mothers who attain a higher level of education may entice their children to do the same.<sup>11</sup>
- Substantial research indicates that education and income level positively affect children in all families, regardless of race or class.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2006*. Detailed Tables: People in Families with Related Children Under 18 by Family Structure, Age, and Sex, Iterated by Income-to-Poverty Ratio and Race.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2006*. Detailed Tables: People in Families with Related Children Under 18 by Family Structure, Age, and Sex, Iterated by Income-to-Poverty Ratio and Race.

<sup>3</sup> “Chutes and Ladders: The Search for Solid Ground for Women in the Workforce.” *Women Work!*, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> “Near poor” is defined as living below 150 percent of the poverty line. U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2006*. Detailed Tables: Age of Householder, Number of Children in Family, Marital Status, Work Experience for people 16 Years and Over.

<sup>5</sup> “Gender Occupational Segregation: It's Still Blue Collars and Pink Ghettos.” *Women Work!*, October 2007. <http://www.womenwork.org/pdfresources/nontrad.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.climbwyoming.org/>

<sup>7</sup> “Education and Job Training Build Strong Families.” Institute for Women's Policy Research, April 2002. <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/b238.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> “Children in Poverty.” Child Trends Databank. [http://www.childtrends.databank.org/pdf/4\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.childtrends.databank.org/pdf/4_PDF.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> “Education and Job Training Build Strong Families.” Institute for Women's Policy Research, April 2002. <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/b238.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Wedgeworth, “State of Adult Literacy.” ProLiteracy, 2004. <http://www.proliteracy.org/downloads/StateofLit04.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Magnuson, “The Effect of Increases in Welfare Mothers’ Education on Their Young Children’s Academic and Behavioral Outcomes: Evidence from the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies Child Outcomes Study.” University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty, September 2003. <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/dps/pdfs/dp127403.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> “Education and Job Training Build Strong Families.” Institute for Women's Policy Research, April 2002. <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/b238.pdf>.