



CAREER DEVELOPMENT COHORT

WOMEN ON THE RISE INTERNATIONAL

At a Glance

42

PARTICIPANTS

42%

OF PARTICIPANTS IMPROVED THEIR INCOME WHILE MANAGING BENEFITS SUCCESSFULLY*

\$20k

THE INCREASE IN SALARY OF ONE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

100%

PARTICIPANTS ACTIVELY USING CAREER PLANS DEVELOPED IN PROGRAM

5

NEW LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS CREATED

*WOTR is still actively working with participants through the Cohort's one-year mentorship.

Digging Deeper

1 Forty-three [43] children were welcomed into Cohort meetings, supervised, and given warm meals.

2 Leaders from across Central Florida signed up for the one-year mentorship to continue supporting program participants.

3 Obstacles were overcome through new community partnerships, leading to expanded services for participants.

Background

100 Women Strong [100WS] focused on economic empowerment for its 2022-2024 grant cycles. For its final year, 100WS members decided to address the fiscal benefits cliff, focusing on women who had to choose between benefits and career advancement.

100 Women Strong members voted to support the pilot year of Women on the Rise International's Career Development Cohort, which included a spring and fall cohort.

Program Summary

WOTR's Career Development Cohort is a program designed to empower women, particularly those facing financial challenges like the benefits cliff, by enhancing their professional skills and financial literacy.

Program Highlights

- Expert-Led Weekly Workshops, with topics including salary negotiation and entrepreneurship
- Financial Literacy Integration
- One-Year Mentorship
- Solutions for common barriers, such as quality childcare and a warm meal provided at weekly sessions



“ I feel more confident in negotiating my salary and have a greater sense of my value.

-Career Development Cohort participant

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Key Program Findings

- Providing childcare, transportation, meals, laptops and AI training proved critical for participant success.
- Adapting the pilot program as it happened enabled a more effective participant experience.
- More time was needed with participants, so the Cohort was able to pivot to 11 weeks [from an 8-week schedule]. A 10-week schedule will be used moving forward.
- Participants faced significant personal challenges, such as layoffs and custody issues, impacting their engagement. To address this, WOTR integrated mindset workshops into the first 30 minutes of each session and moving forward will conduct weekly one-on-one check-ins to provide personalized support.
- Receiving a 100WS grant led to increased trust and credibility in WOTR, leading to more partnerships.



As their needs evolved, we quickly pivoted our offerings, ensuring they had the tools and resources to thrive. Seeing them gain confidence, secure better opportunities, and break cycles of underemployment has been incredibly rewarding. This isn't just career development—it's life transformation.

Arlene Blake

Founder and Executive Director,
Women on the Rise International

What happened after this grant completed?

The successful pilot year of this program highlighted the critical nature of career development services for local women that also addressed other barriers. WOTR secured funding for a second year from other community funders, with its Spring 2025 cohort receiving 72 applications, an overwhelming amount of interest.

This grant exemplified the following:



INNOVATIVE
PILOT PROGRAM



PARTNERSHIP



PIVOTING WHEN
OBSTACLES ARISE

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