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Center for American Women and Politics Wins Grant To Help States Create New Campaign Training Programs for Women

Equipping women from across the political spectrum to run for office is the focus of a new outreach program at the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The program was recently awarded a two-year, \$345,069 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, MI.

Under the grant, CAWP will expand its successful Ready to Run™ bipartisan recruitment and training program for women in three targeted states, Michigan, Mississippi, and New Mexico, who are interested in holding elected and appointed office. A unique aspect of the program is a Diversity Initiative designed to attract more women of color into the political process and encourage them to seek public leadership.

“Holding elected office is an important way for women of every race and ethnicity to influence the policies that shape their communities, their states, and the nation,” says CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “Our strategy is to develop state-based campaign training programs owned and operated by our partnering organizations.”

CAWP has offered Ready to Run™ in New Jersey since 1998 to address the underrepresentation of women in New Jersey politics. In addition to the flagship New Jersey program, statewide programs are currently operating in Alabama, Hawaii, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania. Ready to Run™ has a proven track record, according to project director Jean Sinzdak, who noted that when the program began in New Jersey, the state ranked 39th of the 50 states for the proportion of women serving in its legislature. Now the Garden State ranks 14th.

“The Kellogg grant will support the recruitment and training of institutional partners in the targeted states, provide seed funding to help launch the statewide programs including special diversity components, and allow us to provide ongoing program support until the new programs are firmly established,” Sinzdak said.

Central to the innovative Ready to Run™ model is a comprehensive curriculum that uses state and local campaign experts to highlight the specifics of running for office in a particular state or region. The program demystifies the political process, encourages more women to run, and introduces them to elected and appointed leaders, campaign consultants, and party officials to whom they can turn as they get ready to run.

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Established in 1930, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society. Grants are concentrated in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and southern Africa.

About CAWP

The Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is a university-based research, education and public service center. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women’s changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women’s influence and leadership in public life. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.