

**GENDER WEALTH  
FRAMEWORK**



# SUMMIT REPORT

What follows is the summary of insights and connections we gathered from the over 100+ 3rd Annual Gender Wealth Summit participants. Ranging in community demographics and from a variety of industries, they shared their real-time reactions to the Gender Wealth Framework and its dimensions, and provided a road map on what is significant as we build collective power to close the gender wealth gap.

Fall 2024



**WOMEN'S WAY**

# **GENDER WEALTH SUMMIT REPORT**

*"When wealth is accumulated, we live and retire with greater dignity, freedom, and peace of mind. Our communities are prosperous, resilient, and vibrant. Future generations have the freedom to dream big and become all they truly can be. We are healthy, and know that our family, networks, and communities are healthy, spiritually whole and contributing."*

- The Maven Collaborative

## **WHY DOES *THIS* DEFINITION OF WEALTH MATTER?**

Conventional discourse frames discussions about wealth gaps in terms of disparities in things like income, homeownership, retirement, or investment accounts. These things are important, because they allow people to be economically stable, as well as invest in their own futures and the futures of their loved ones.

However, when thinking about wealth for women or other marginalized genders, we know that the traditional definition of wealth leaves out the **nuance and narrative**. By nuance, we mean - how do other genders think about, talk about, and seek to experience wealth? What is specific, unique, and particular about these perspectives? As we explore the root causes of the gender wealth gap, it is important for us to highlight the nuance in experience that results directly from systemic drivers such as racialized capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and wealth supremacy. In drilling down to the nuance, we are better able to highlight how systemic drivers shape the lives of marginalized genders.

Additionally, as we consider solutions to the gender wealth gap, it is equally as important to focus on narratives. Narratives are mindsets and beliefs that help us organize our thinking and make sense of the world. A narrative functions as a story or perspective we adopt to sort through why things are happening the way they happen. In the case of a gender wealth gap, we want to begin to unpack the narratives that racialized capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and wealth supremacy provide us. How do these systemic drivers shape our internal stories about how the economy works, what it allows, and who or what it protects? By focusing on nuance and narrative within the gender wealth gap, we are more effective at getting to the root cause of systemic drivers that negatively impact and influence wealth for everyone.

# WHAT IS THE GENDER WEALTH FRAMEWORK?

The Gender Wealth Framework is a way to think about wealth that considers **material well-being, lived experience, and systemic conditions/context**. These 3 themes matter when considering how we want to build conditions that allow for economic stability in addition to the holistic experience of abundance that our communities tell us they want.

## GENDER WEALTH FRAMEWORK

*When wealth is accumulated, it allows us to live and retire with greater **dignity, freedom, and peace of mind** and for our communities to be **prosperous, resilient, and vibrant**. Wealth allows us to provide future generations with the freedom to dream big and become all they truly can be. It also means being **healthy**, and knowing that your family, networks and communities are **healthy, spiritually whole, and contributing**.*

– The Maven Collaborative –

### Material Well-being

### Lived Experience

### System Conditions/Context



#### Health and Healing

- Care includes healing spaces and practices that represent various cultural frameworks/traditions and are gender affirming, inclusive and accessible.
- Institutions strive to create a safe, trusting relationship with their communities.
- Women have access to clean, green healing spaces in their own community.
- Women have access to the full complement of health services (physical, dental, mental) that span the continuum of care/life span.
- Women have time to rest and restore without expectations of labor or productivity.



#### Stability and Opportunity

- Women access quality jobs or self-employment that provide a family-thriving wage and benefits that allow them to live with dignity and ease.
- Women get to do work they love without being undervalued in the market and can advance in any field free of dismantling structural biases.
- Women have access to a social safety net that provides basic rights (healthcare, food, shelter, etc.) by virtue of their humanity.
- Women are free from extractive debt policies and practices and have access to affordable assets that build wealth.



#### Freedom, Joy, and Belonging

- Women feel free to pursue joy and leisure and can find wellness communities free from structural biases.
- Women feel treated with dignity and respect, and their lived experiences are honored, valued, and validated by people and institutions.
- Women are free to make choices and exercise self-determination.
- Women feel connected to their communities and contribute to shaping their communities.



#### Family and Community Care

- Women can care for their children, families, and community without fear of losing a job or their economic security.
- Women have high-quality caregiving options due to a robust care infrastructure.
- Women have access to networks of care and mutual aid across their lifespan.
- Women are free from gender-based violence in their families and communities.



#### Resource Navigation and Support

- Women have places and spaces to go and be supported and heard without shame, judgment, or guilt.
- Women receive support that considers historical and structural inequities as much as individual choices.
- Women can easily find and access available resources.
- Resources and supports meet the needs and goals of women and are designed by and with women.

## MATERIAL WEALTH

When we say **material wealth**, we know that economic stability is a precursor of wealth. WOMEN'S WAY believes in thinking strategically about what women and other marginalized genders need for economic stability - which means looking at traditional markers like homeownership and wages, but also considering things uniquely experienced by women and marginalized genders, such as care obligations, occupational segregation, and extractive debt policies. We also know that these measures alone are not enough - they are one moment in time. Common wisdom tells us that most of us are one medical emergency, job loss, or relationship change away from financial instability.

## LIVED EXPERIENCE

**Lived experience** is a concept that comes directly from our communities. This refers to their felt experience, their embodied responses - not just what it looks like to have a symbol of wealth like an advanced degree, but what it feels like to hold that degree in a workplace where many women's experiences are shaped by lack of dignity or exploitation. What is their experience like? How does it feel? This is a direct response to a culture that encourages us to divorce our thinking from our feelings, a culture that encourages us to think of ourselves as units of production rather than whole, feeling beings. Lived experience measures push back on this separation and force us to consider what women are telling us about how they are accessing and experiencing wealth.

## SYSTEMIC CONDITIONS/CONTEXT

**Systemic conditions/context** allows us to consider and directly respond to the structural and historical conditions of wealth. WOMEN'S WAY believes wealth is not a series of individual choices, but an experience that has been carefully guarded and protected for the privileged elite. Far too often, wealth is a structured advantage created by systems that favor the dominant. Systems, however complex and pervasive, are made up of people. Our view of systems change points us to the potential in focusing on people; more specifically, the mindsets that people hold and how they influence norms, social relationships, and flow of resources.

How do we craft pathways and responses that intervene at the level of mindsets? We believe systems are groups of people, making decisions and encoding beliefs into practices and policies. How, then, can we impact beliefs and mindsets? Collective change must start at the level of design - considering the ideas and mindsets that prop up and enable systems.

# WHAT ARE THE DIMENSIONS? HOW DO THEY RELATE TO THE GENDER WEALTH FRAMEWORK?

We identified a specific definition for wealth. We know how important it is to consider nuance and narrative when thinking about a gender wealth framework. How does this relate to the dimensions?

Pulling directly from the feedback from our communities at each Gender Wealth Summit, dimensions are themes of wealth with related indicators of success. Think of dimensions as how we sort, organize, and group together the major ideas of gender wealth. All the things we want and need to experience abundance - here is how we make sense of it.



## Health and Healing

- Care includes healing spaces and practices that represent various cultural frameworks/traditions and are inclusive, gender-affirming, and accessible.
- Institutions strive to create a safe, trusting relationship with their communities.
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## WHAT HAPPENED AT THE 3RD ANNUAL GENDER WEALTH SUMMIT?

Every year that we host the Gender Wealth Summit, we ask for our communities to respond and reflect on the previous year's work. And each year, we have created meaning together- getting more specific about what we want, the words to use, and the framework we believe in. This year, we continued that journey by diving deeper into the dimensions of the Gender Wealth Framework. We invited ten organizations that represent each of the five dimensions of the Gender Wealth Framework. Their work aligns or connects to the value statements in each dimension.

At the Third Annual Gender Wealth Summit, our mission was to take in their work and begin to build a deeper understanding of the ecosystem we want and need to advance the Gender Wealth Framework. We asked participants to reflect; how do these dimensions connect and why do they matter as we talk about an abundant future?

As a network, we wanted Summit participants to share with us how their lives, their work, and their community was impacted or influenced by these dimensions. When thinking about our local gender wealth ecosystem: What are the connections to be made? How do we strengthen each other's work? What do we want to advocate for and how do we build a sense of solidarity?

Together, we laid the groundwork for important collective action; knowing each other's work, reflecting on the Gender Wealth Framework and its' dimensions, and planting the seeds for a coalition that is stronger than the sum of its parts.

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### **Stability and Opportunity: Key Takeaways**

Summit participants reflected on institutions and their relationships to them. How do people challenge the unwieldy power held by institutions? Women want more accountability from big corporations - from worker protections to investment into communities. As a collective, Summit participants expressed a desire for power building, with two main strategies highlighted. Some participants wanted to focus on legislative protection and building political power; others desired to know how to advocate for and protect themselves in an individual manner. No matter the strategy, participants were interested in building power. They reflected on the role of laws as a source of protection from exploitation, exploring the potential and limits of legislative power and unpacking the differences between laws that work for corporations and laws that work for people. Even within this strategy, participants acknowledged the role of narratives in influencing outcomes; one participant summed up the prevailing wisdom as "Narratives eat policy for breakfast." Finally, Summit participants acknowledged intersectionality. They spoke about Stability and Opportunity as it impacts people with a variety of identities or social locations; people who are undocumented, people who have been incarcerated, people who are Transgender.



### **Health and Healing: Key Takeaways**

Summit participants saw mental health as foundational to everything else they want to accomplish and achieve. They saw this dimension as relating to all others - feeling that healing and well-being were instrumental in being able to access and experience all dimensions of gender wealth. Again, participants brought in intersectionality- how does this health and healing impact diverse groups? Participants reflected on accessibility and affordability within Health and Healing, specifically exploring barriers such as time constraints, space, even insurance. People wanted to explore a range of modalities within Health and Healing- somatic work and spiritual practices were raised as ways participants wanted to practice healing. Summit participants continued to focus on narratives- groups talked about feeling stigmatized and battling with the idea that women do not deserve care. They also mentioned feeling burdened by the vulnerability in asking for help and seeking safety in their lives and networks.



### **Freedom, Joy, and Belonging: Key Takeaways**

Within this dimension, there was ample discussion around connections to community, both physically and socially. Summit participants desired safe spaces to be known by others and to preserve community. Consistently, people expressed wanting to gather and come together for support. Within community spaces, they want to exercise self-determination, feel a sense of belonging, and build with their community members. Summit participants were actively grappling with institutions pushing neighbors out of their communities and wanted to preserve storytelling as a form of resistance against this. Displacement came up as a concern throughout groups, and one participant noted that “Money is coming to Philly, but not to the people.”



### **Family and Community Care: Key Takeaways**

Summit participants continued to reflect on systems issues; more specifically, the roles of institutions and organizations in sharing wealth, reinvesting into communities, and sharing ownership decisions. They unpacked the possibilities in representation within organizations and institutions, as well as building power outside of those organizations. Participants continued to think in intersectional ways and reflect on how narratives shape their personal and collective experiences. As one participant noted, “Race and class matter.” Care work was highlighted, both for children and for the elderly. Participants reflected on unpaid caregiving being overlooked and undervalued in families, as well as paid caregiving serving as spaces for abuse and exploitation. They talked about the impact of policies on their caregiving, speaking favorably about such policies as the Child Tax Credit and Guaranteed Income. Participants also reflected on their connections to their communities- they want to stay in their neighborhoods and form stronger connections with each other.





## **Resource Navigation and Support: Key Takeaways**

Summit participants reflected on how inaccessible resources are - women feel confused about where to get help. They also felt that help or support is often delivered in a punitive and bureaucratic way. They want clear, step-by-step assistance and want to expand how help is delivered; nontraditional pathways and trusted messengers were strategies of interest. Participants continued to reflect on narratives- unpacking ideas of worth and deservedness. One participant summed it up by saying “You have to prove you’re worthy of the entitlements that exist.” Summit participants were also thinking big picture, reflecting on the nature of capitalism and how the idea of “profit over people” impacts resources like funding. Funding spaces and funding siloes were also top of mind for group- how to remove bureaucracies and improve or expand support.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We are grateful to uplift the learnings of the Summit Participants, as we believe their rich feedback provides the groundwork for strategies to close the gender wealth gap. As such, we have synthesized this feedback into a set of recommendations for funders, practitioners, movement allies, and community members all dedicated to closing the gender wealth gap.

### **1. Fund Narrative Change Work**

Our communities are clear about the ways in which harmful stereotypes, biases, and myths have impacted their engagement with systems, their experiences, and their ability to self-determine. As an ecosystem, we must invest in narrative change work that delegitimizes harmful narratives, and as Rashad Robinson from Color of Change notes “raises the floor on what’s acceptable and pushes up the ceiling on what’s possible.”

### **2. Build Advocacy Skills**

Over and over, we heard the call for increasing power-building capacity. Our communities want to engage productively with structural power by expanding their knowledge, engaging their talents, and challenging institutions to redefine their commitments to the people they serve. We must meet the needs by providing trainings and other initiatives that enable individuals to sharpen their advocacy skills.

### **3. Convene to Build Collective Power**

The need and desire for the gender wealth network to come together was mentioned by participants repeatedly. Individuals and groups are yearning for opportunities to have 1-1 reflective conversations and process in small groups. They want to create connection and break down isolation and siloes, both to increase their effectiveness in their work and to deepen relationships. Convenings must prioritize providing safer spaces for people to share their lived experiences, plot challenges and opportunities at various levels in systems and practice community.

### **4. Invest in Wellness and Healing**

Systems change work demands engagement in an avalanche of emotions, sensations, and reckonings. Often, those most marginalized by harmful systems struggle to find time and opportunities to repair their internal landscapes. All of us engaged in change work require restoration and recentering to sustain our collective commitment. We must be intentional in offering a range of accessible options that allow people to tend to their well-being as a matter of practice, rather than a reaction to crisis.

### **5. Foster Collaboration**

The gender wealth ecosystem represents groups with a range of access to platforms, visibility, resources, opportunities, and power. While our strategies may differ, the network can only be strengthened when we can connect and amplify the work of aligned partners. Collaboration must demonstrate a commitment to an equitable outcome, requiring evolving practices and processes that are funded and supported over time. Collaboration should also foster collective learning that leads new learnings and helps to scale alternative economic models.

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