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### **Generation Wheeling Announces Pay Equity Pledge for Area Employers**

**WHEELING, W.Va.** – May 19, 2021 – Generation Wheeling, in partnership with the City of Wheeling, is calling on businesses to help close the gender pay gap in the city. The pledge, called ‘Wheeling Works for Women,’ is a voluntary, employer-led initiative to enact changes that will improve the gender pay gap, including clearer communication, greater internal transparency, and improving company policies related to pay and compensation.

In February 2021, Generation Wheeling launched a survey to gauge the opinion of Wheeling workers on the topic of gender pay equity, which revealed a need for more transparency in the workplace when it comes to fair wages.

While West Virginia has legislation in place prohibiting pay discrimination based on gender and other protected identification categories, annual data analyses consistently identify the state as having one of the highest gender pay gaps in the nation. Studies show that West Virginia women earn as low as 71 cents for every dollar made by their male counterparts.

During Tuesday’s city council meeting, Mayor Glenn Elliott announced a resolution to support the efforts of Generation Wheeling and the Wheeling Works for Women campaign. The resolution encourages all organizations to learn more about pay inequality and how implicit bias can contribute to the issue, evaluate internal policies and procedures for potential areas of improvement, and participate in an event hosted by Generation Wheeling to share best practices with other organizations.

“Despite the existence of legislation prohibiting gender-pay discrimination and the considerable gains made by women in the workplace generally in recent years, gender pay gaps are still very real,” said Mayor Elliott. “In an effort to close these wage gaps, the City of Wheeling encourages employers to evaluate policies and procedures for potential areas of improvement towards gender pay equity. Everyone should have an opportunity for success regardless of gender. I commend Generation Wheeling and their efforts with Wheeling Works for Women to provide education, support, and resources to employers that will assist in addressing gender-pay inequalities.”

"I am deeply grateful for the work of organizations like Generation Wheeling who exhibit strong and inclusive leadership around issues that impact our communities. The gender pay gap is

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more than just a term - It is a real and systemic issue facing women and non-conforming individuals across our economy,” said Wheeling City Councilwoman Rosemary Ketchum.

Williams Lea, which employs over 550 people in Wheeling, will be the flagship signer of the pledge.

“I am so happy to see ‘Wheeling Works for Women’ coming together. This is an issue that I’m personally passionate about, but it is also important to Generation Wheeling’s objective to attract, retain and advance young people in the area,” said Generation Wheeling board chair Jen Materkoski. “It is critical to implement programs like this to show that we are committed to a fair and equitable Wheeling. We are grateful to have the support of the City of Wheeling and are looking forward to seeing this project advance and make a positive impact in our community.”

Organizations can join the pledge on a rolling basis beginning today. Joiners will receive a window cling sticker for their business to identify them as a participant and an invitation to attend a best practices event to be held later this year. Those interested can contact Materkoski at 304-559-9491 or via email at [jmaterkoski@gmail.com](mailto:jmaterkoski@gmail.com).

## **About Generation West Virginia & Generation Wheeling**

**Generation Wheeling** is part of **Generation West Virginia’s** network of local Generations across the state, all uniting together under the same mission - to attract, retain, and advance young people in the Mountain State. We do this by creating the changes we want to see in order to make West Virginia a place where young people want to work, live, and give.

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