



## **Crittenton Women's Union Backgrounder**

Crittenton Women's Union (CWU), a Boston-based nonprofit innovator in breaking the cycle of poverty, uniquely combines direct service programs, independent research and public advocacy in its mission to help low-income women attain economic independence.

### **What Makes Us Unique**

CWU is a social service provider, a think tank, and a grassroots advocacy organization—all in one. Each arm of the organization informs and intersects with the others, fostering a flexible, dynamic and creative environment that produces measurable results. CWU applies this innovative, holistic approach to working with its clients, connecting them to a network of resources and accompanying them on their journey to economic independence.

### **Direct Services**

Helping approximately 1,400 people a year, CWU offers emergency, transitional, and supportive housing, workforce development and education programs, and family support services. CWU's housing programs serve approximately 420 families a year, including emergency and transitional shelter for homeless families and supportive housing services for formerly homeless families living in permanent housing. CWU is one of the largest providers of emergency family shelter in Massachusetts.

CWU's Career Family Opportunity program provides low-income single parents with the intensive support necessary to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency within five years. Its Economic Mobility Institute offers a cafeteria-style curriculum of self-sufficiency trainings that includes Woman to Woman, a 12-week computer skills and professional development course. CWU's full-time GED program serves young adults and incorporates life skills, work skills, and computer training. The Boston Neighborhoods Healthy Families program helps first-time moms and dads under age 21 build strong parenting skills.

### **Research**

CWU conducts research into the economic, political and social barriers disadvantaged women face in their efforts to gain economic security. It assesses its own programs, tracks outcomes, measures program performance, and lays the groundwork for the design of new programs.

CWU translates its research into practical, web-based tools that equip clients with valuable information and resources. Its "Hot Jobs" web tool provides job descriptions, education and training requirements, and links to schools for 11 high-in-demand occupations that pay family sustaining wages and require two years or less of post-secondary education. Its "Economic Independence Calculator" allows a family to determine how much it needs to earn to meet basic living expenses in Massachusetts.

### **Advocacy**

CWU's in-depth research and on-the-ground client experience makes it a powerful advocate for public policy and legislative initiatives that remove obstacles that prevent low-income women from attaining economic independence.

CWU's Voices Advocacy Council, Voices Advocacy Network and Voices Project Blog work together to inform and educate policy makers and community leaders on new research and pressing issues. CWU publishes policy briefs, hosts conferences, builds coalitions and communicates with the media and public in its efforts to raise awareness and support on the barriers facing low-income women.

**History**

Incorporated in July 2006, Crittenton Women's Union arose from the merger of two historic Boston organizations—Crittenton Inc. and The Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Inc. Crittenton and The Women's Union combined 300 years of experience and expertise in meeting the needs of low-income women and their families.

**Financial Support**

In Fiscal Year 2010, CWU's operating revenue was \$10.5 million, with 70% of its revenue from government contracts and 30% from private philanthropy. Seventy-nine percent of monies spent funded programs and services: housing, education, workforce development, family support, research and advocacy. Fundraising, management and administrative costs accounted for 21% of expenses.

**Locations**

CWU's administrative offices are located in downtown Boston. Its congregant housing facility, Hastings House in Brighton, accommodates 58 families and also houses CWU's education, workforce development, and family support programs. CWU also operates additional sites in Cambridge, Dorchester, Mattapan, and South Boston.

**Operations and Management**

President and CEO Elisabeth D. Babcock, MCRP, PhD, and a six-person leadership team oversee a staff of 120 employees. CWU is governed by a 19-member Board of Directors, chaired by Peter Zane, former President, Kryptonite Corporation.

For more information, go to [www.liveworkthrive.org](http://www.liveworkthrive.org).

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