The Women’s Organizing Network runs a six-month program for women organizers at social justice organizing groups and unions across New York City. In the Leadership Circle, participants build relationships of mutual support in order to advance their own leadership, support the leadership of women members, and take action to work to bring a gender lens into their work.

- There will be a two-day, in-town retreat from September 14 - 15. The WON cohort will meet one Monday evening per month, for six months: September- February. There will also be conference calls once a month.
- An intimate group of approximately 10 organizers who identify as women (trans or cis), non-binary or genderqueer.
- This group includes a diverse set of women from different sectors of social justice community organizing, and are mostly “mid-level” organizers. The group will be majority women of color.

**Power through Support and Solidarity**

Talk through the challenges you face in your leadership development at work. Deconstruct these challenges and strategize on how to overcome them.

Reflect on your leadership development goals.

Get support and give support, with like-minded women organizers.

**Learning and Analysis**

Learn, discuss and reflect on: unconscious gender and racial bias in the social justice workplace, internalized oppression, racism, and intersectional gender analysis.

Learn about evidence-based strategies for overcoming barriers in white, male-dominated workplaces.

**Action Projects**

Envision the change we want to see in our organizations to support women’s leadership and women’s interests.

Develop and carry out an action project to help advance your own leadership, or to help your organization take steps to more effectively and explicitly lift up women.

Apply Now!

Deadline: Applicants accepted on a rolling basis through July 31st (11:59pm)

Save the Date: Opening Retreat Sept 14 - 15

Women of color encouraged to apply! Selected participants notified by Sept 2nd.

Cost: $600 per participant. We encourage you to seek support from your organization to participate, but organizational support is not required. Scholarships are available for both individuals and organizations – please make a note of this in your application if needed.
Key impacts and outcomes from previous leadership circles

Participants gained new ways of thinking about:

- Their own leadership
- Supporting other women in their organizations
- Applying an intersectional gender lens to the issues they work on.

In their own words:

“The cohort was agitational for me, to not just accept that in post-college activism people don’t question the patriarchy.”

“Excellent modeling of self-awareness, humility and transparent facilitation.”

“I realized that I need to create my own space and leadership opportunities to grow and learn more in my organization. You can’t get something you don’t ask for!”

“The exercise where white women and women of color split into groups and then came back together [to openly share their experiences of racism] was incredibly powerful!”

Success Stories

“Through my experience with WON, I gained the confidence and figured out a smart strategy to speak up about issues between my supervisor and me. I reached out to co-workers to learn about their issues and together, we created a support group. During the search for a new supervisor, I made sure to clearly define and advocate for my needs; today I now have a more supportive manager with stronger leadership. By reflecting on my situation with other women in WON, I realized that it was up to me to push for change if I wanted to see, and that my own leadership depended on it.” – Anonymous Organizer, 2017 WON Leadership Circle

“I felt that the WON Leadership Circle was a sacred space where we could reflect and speak without having to prove ourselves.” – Latchmi Gopal, Community Organizer at Momentum and 2017 WON Leadership Circle

A union organizer sought to counteract top-down leadership norms in her organization, using more participatory, in-depth debriefs after actions and appreciating individual staff’s contributions. After they won the campaign she led, her team said it was the best campaign experience they had ever had, because of her leadership style.
What is The Women's Organizing Network?

“Women Organizers Building Power for Ourselves”

The Women’s Organizing Network (WON) builds the capacity of women organizers. We also build power among women organizers to shift the culture of organizing.

WON aspires to strong feminist and anti-racist principles. We want to knock down the doors of the old boys’ clubs around us, pave our own organizing paths and build on the foundation of generations of women organizers before us. Among the women organizers, authors and scholars that we draw our inspiration and curriculum from include: Kimberly Crenshaw, Audre Lorde, Brittney Cooper, Ella Baker, Roxanne Gay, bell hooks, Dolores Huerta, Patrice Cullers, Tina Lopes, Barb Thomas, Joan C. Williams and Virginia Valian.

We believe that social justice organizing will be even stronger when we have:
- More women, particularly women of color, in top leadership of our organizations.
- Women’s equality explicitly at the center of issue campaigns.
- A shift in the model and culture of organizing.

How we’re going to get it:

1. Building power through support and solidarity.
2. Influencing our organizations to make changes that will better support women.
3. Envisioning a new model of organizing: If we want to make change, we first have to dream it! What would it look like to shift our organizing culture to be more respectful of women? Do we want to promote new leadership styles as women? What would it look like to put women’s equality front and center in all our work, along with racial, economic and all other forms of justice?

Why is this needed?

Women shouldn’t have to fight to get taken seriously, but we do! We have done the research and collected stories from over 200 women organizers across NYC. And women across the board, from entry-level to organizing veterans, agree: it’s a struggle to get taken seriously by elected officials, coalition members, coworkers or our bosses at times.

We’re also not going to win if our work fails to include women’s inequality and women’s specific experiences in our issue campaigns. If the majority of minimum wage earners are women of color, if single mothers of color are the ones who most need affordable housing, and if moms are leading the fight for better schools, then we can't solve these issues without deepening our understanding of gender and sexism.