



PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S GROUP FACT SHEET

The Dress for Success Professional Women's Group provides women with support, practical information and inspiration to achieve self-defined success in career and life.

What It Is: The Professional Women's Group is an international networking association for Dress for Success clients who have recently entered the workforce, some for the first time. The Professional Women's Group was created to promote employment retention and career advancement by providing valuable skill-building information, while creating a safe environment to network with other professionals. It is the first and only employment retention model that moves low-income women towards self-sufficiency by addressing their social and economic needs in relation to work, home and community.

Why It Works: Women making the transition from unemployment into the workforce face a myriad of challenges, from understanding corporate culture to handling personal finances, often with no support or guidance. The Professional Women's Group provides a safe environment where members can learn how to network and develop professional skills.

How It Works: Members attend monthly seminars on a variety of career development topics. Each meeting consists of two key elements: an expert speaker leading an informational discussion and a networking period. In addition to monthly meetings, members receive opportunities for career coaching, mentoring, discounts on various products and services, and additional clothing and accessories to complete a working wardrobe. Members also have the opportunity to become their affiliate's representative at the annual *Success Summit*, our signature leadership conference for select PWG members and coordinators.

A sample twelve-month curriculum:

- Lending and Investing
- Good Etiquette Is Good Business
- Identity Theft
- You and Your Taxes
- VALUE Communication: Skills for Success
- Setting Goals and Making Them Happen in 90 days
- Budget Planning
- Embracing Your Fears
- Work/Life Balance for Working Women
- Expanding Your Emotional IQ: Resolving Conflicts at Work
- Nutrition for the Working Woman
- Winning at Success: 5 Keys to Enjoying Your Life's Work
- Expectations of Employers

About our program and participants...

- **51 Dress for Success affiliates have Professional Women's Group programs.**
- **75% of Professional Women's Group members remained employed.** 20% received job promotions. 22% supervise another person as a job requirement.
- **42% received a salary increase.** A typical member earns about \$20,374 per year, or about \$10.51 an hour. Prior to joining the Professional Women's Group, 70% of members were receiving some form of government assistance. Although this number has decreased, 40% of employed members still receive some form of federal or state benefit to make ends meet.
- **80% of Professional Women's Group members stated they were the primary wage-earner.** More than half of our members have children under the age of 18 and many have their 20-something children still living at home. An increasing number also care for their parents or grandchildren. Less than half have employer-sponsored health insurance.
- **57% of members enrolled in or completed educational programs.** 41% of members have either a 2- or 4-year college degree.
- **25% own their own home.** The majority of members rent, but 17% either live with relatives or in supportive housing such as homeless/domestic violence shelters or drug treatment programs.
- **50% of members said they had Internet access at home.** The same number own cell phones.
- **40 is the average age of a Professional Women's Group member.** Women between the ages of 18 and 73 join the Professional Women's Group. Most women have 2 children. More than 60% of members are women of color. 15% are married or in long-term stable relationships.
- **67%** of Professional Women's Group members have a checking account and **51%** have a savings account.