



# **AAUW Pennsylvania**

## **Statement supporting AAUW open membership**

January 2021

When AAUW was founded, there were few opportunities for women to have a voice. Often it fell on the shoulders of women who were fortunate enough to have the benefit of a college education to have an impact in their communities.

Times change and so should AAUW. We witness women who support AAUW's equity mission making significant contributions and impacting their communities yet unable to obtain secondary degrees for social and economic reasons often related to gender inequality. Think of those performing essential jobs during this pandemic-- EMTs, LPNs, CNAs, phlebotomists, radiographic technicians, and grocery store and restaurant employees delivering your groceries and carry-outs.

Many times, AAUW branches work in collaboration on AAUW mission-based projects with strong, committed, fierce allies in our communities yet can't extend an invitation for membership because they are not "qualified." This hypocrisy is embarrassing. We need to be an organization that, when we say we work for equity, means we offer membership equity, too.

In many cases it is the women without degrees who face the most difficult obstacles to equity in our society. Opening our membership to women from all walks of life who are deeply committed to our cause will serve to strengthen our organization for the future.