



2024-2025 Advocacy Agenda

THE AGENDA FOR WOMEN



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

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2024-2025 ADVOCACY AGENDA

The **2024-2025 Agenda for Women** is a bold, nonpartisan strategy aimed at accelerating women's economic opportunity by prioritizing gender equity. When women's economic growth is optimized the result is stronger families, stronger communities, and a stronger Western New York for all.

The WNY Women's Foundation is the **leading advocate for issues disproportionately impacting women in our region**. Advocacy is a major part of our work and one strategic tool to ensure that the women in our community have the support, resources, and networks they need to thrive.

Central to our advocacy work are conversations and partnerships in Western New York and across New York State, all aimed at **creating big, systemic change that empowers women and promotes intersectional* gender equity**.

The WNY Women's Foundation transforms systems, culture, and policy to create opportunities for each woman to thrive. Our work focuses on women's economic empowerment and female/gender minority leadership, supporting people across the region.

The WNY Women's Foundation uses all approaches to amplify philanthropists as advocates, works in a nonpartisan manner, and uses our Board and Emeritae Board, and Committee members as educated ambassadors to ramp up issue awareness on issues impacting women and gender minorities.

It is not enough for us to invest solely in programmatic solutions to accelerate economic opportunity for women. Without meaningful change in systems, women and their families will never have a complete pathway to success. This is why **we advocate for policies and funding that break down barriers** and invest in movements that are creating economic change so that everyone has the opportunity to thrive and lead meaningful lives.

**Intersectional approach considers the barriers and challenges faced by those who experience intersecting and compounding forms of discrimination and bias related to gender, race, and other factors, including sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, and socioeconomic status. This includes addressing discrimination and bias faced by Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American people, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, and other people of color.*



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ROLES FOR PHILANTHROPY IN ADVOCACY:

Philanthropy is a multi-faceted approach to creating solutions in our communities. The WNY Women's Foundation believes that there is a valuable place for philanthropic organizations at the advocacy table.

Foundations and other philanthropic organizations can be a voice of reason, clarity, and neutrality in important conversations with elected leaders, community partners, and other funders.

There are many ways for philanthropists to also be advocates, including as:

✦ **CONVENER**

Bringing together partners

✦ **EDUCATOR**

Informing the public, legislators,
and media

✦ **CAPACITY-BUILDER**

Growing the power of
organizations

✦ **FUNDER**

Supporting critical programs
and people

✦ **CHAMPION**

Promoting important issues

✦ **SCOUT**

Identifying solutions for
problems facing women

✦ **RESEARCHER**

Discovering compelling,
meaningful data

✦ **DEFENDER**

Guarding women's rights

✦ **PARTNER**

Collaborating across sectors



2024-2025 ADVOCACY AGENDA

THE WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION'S CROSS-CUTTING ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

- Seek out and listen to the voices of all women and gender minorities to inform our work and ensure diverse perspectives in our approaches.
- Serve as thought-leaders, bringing a data-informed, gender, and intersectional lens to conversations about early childhood development, community development, workforce development, and issues impacting women and gender minorities.
- Influence policy/funding as a nonpartisan, trusted resource, impactful high-level thinker, and respected connector.
- Partner with advocacy organizations to advance and champion policies that support women's economic empowerment and leadership.
- Provide leadership and a gender lens to coalitions and organizations
- Provide educational opportunities to Board, Emeritae, and partners to improve our impact.
- Scale impact by focusing on research, listening, and responding to community concerns.
- Create mutually respectful relations with key local, state, and federal elected officials.
- Collate data, present in consistent format, and amplify this community asset to media, elected officials, and partners.
- Amplify community engagement through *Women in Action*, our grassroots advocacy program.
- Convene WNY organizations serving women around issues that unite women to amplify messaging for collective impact.
- Support the advocacy efforts of others when related to our work.
- Lend our voice to community planning processes and events, such as Women's History Month.

2024-2025 ADVOCACY FOCUS AREAS:

- 1 WOMEN ASCENDING AS LEADERS
- 2 WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



1

WOMEN ASCENDING AS LEADERS

The WNY Women's Foundation will engage the community to achieve gender parity in leadership by driving change for the issues disproportionately impacting women in the workplace, elected office, business ownership, on Boards, and in the community. We are committed to eliminating barriers to women's advancement, including occupational, gender, and racial oppression and discrimination. This includes access to quality, affordable child care and education for school-age children and younger, aged zero to thirteen, as a workforce support.

STEPS TO COMPLETE:

- We will drive solution-focused awareness of the residual effects of the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on working women, elevating the personal and economic impact of women leaving the workforce, reversing a decades-long trend.
- Execute ALL IN strategy, including:
 - Coordinate virtual Learning Collaboratives for ALL IN partners, diversifying topics of discussion.
 - Facilitate Ready, Set, Lead! plan to empower, mentor and educate young leaders.
 - Research and share with employer partners best practices and policies for implementing gender equity in the workplace, promoting women into leadership positions, reducing the gender pay gap, and identifying appropriate benchmarks of success.
 - Create engaging Pathways to Process Speaker Series that provides opportunities for leadership education (ALL IN to help to inform topics).
- Advocate with a lens for a comprehensive strategy that not only ensures a gender-inclusive workforce, but also centers women as a key driver of their family's economic success.
- Advance Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Caregiving Center as an essential workforce support for this regional economic driver.
- Support White House National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. "Supporting women's and girls' full participation in social, economic, civic, and political life—and ensuring they are represented at the tables where decisions are made—is essential to progress in every other area and a precondition to advancing strong and sustainable democracies. To advance democracy, rights, and full participation, we will:
 - Work to advance gender equity and equality in the law and ensure that rights on paper are fully implemented in practice.
 - Work towards gender parity and diversity in leadership roles."
- Support female college athletes through the UB Game ChangeHER initiative.



1

WOMEN ASCENDING AS LEADERS

POLICY, RESOURCES & FUNDING FOCUSES:

- Reimagined workforce that supports women (workplace policies and flexibility without unintended penalty).
- Strengthen system supports for workers including affordable quality child care and elder care for the long-term. Policies that would ensure women and gender minorities can find economic security and success along with health for themselves and their families include:
 - Identify relevant research to better inform employers and key stakeholders on the value of child care as investment in our community and future workforce.
 - Bring voice to the economic value of women's unpaid work at home.
 - Employer-offered or subsidized child care (lower costs for working families).
 - Paid sick leave for all workers (NYS Paid Sick Leave has work compensation and longevity limits).
 - Fair Pay for Home Care policy: Increase compensation for home and long-term care workers
- NYS Pay Equity law awareness
- NYS Salary history law awareness
- NYS Salary transparency education awareness
- NYS Voting access legislation
- Support child care reforms, policy, and funding as noted under Economic Empowerment section (page 7).
- Support increased reimbursement rates for early intervention therapists (majority women), and services
- Lead WNY organizational efforts to educate impacted audiences to endorse NYS ERA Budget Proposition November 2024
- Expand efforts to distribute broadly, a robust Voter Education Guide and rack cards to encourage educated voter engagement



2

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The WNY Women's Foundation is committed to driving opportunities and ensuring equitable resources, including career opportunities, for all women and gender minorities to engage in the community and experience economic success for themselves and their families—not just surviving, but thriving.

STEPS TO COMPLETE:

- Engage community partners to execute a comprehensive and person-centered, trauma-informed workforce development program that work for women and gender minorities, particularly those currently living in systemically under-resourced communities., trauma-informed workforce development that work for women and gender minorities, particularly those currently living in systemically under-resourced communities.
- Invest in WNY Women's Foundation mPower: From Education to Employment initiatives.
- Grow the region's investment in education workforce models that strengthen the pipeline for women and gender minorities to move into high-demand jobs.
- Engage and support the innovation, creativity, and resilience of Black, Indigenous, and women of color and their communities.
- Engage employers to commit to creating systemic change that supports job sustainability, particularly for students in our mPower: From Education to Employment initiatives. These hard-working, highly-motivated women enter the workforce from systemically under-resourced communities with little-to-no corporate exposure.
- Raise employer awareness of the Benefit Cliff effect which often derails a woman prematurely from her career.



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ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

POLICY, RESOURCES & FUNDING FOCUSES:

- Improve economic security.
- Build an economy that works for women, gender minorities, and their families including:
 - Ensure that people have equal access to good jobs, including by addressing persistent gender discrimination and systemic barriers to full workforce participation.
 - Dismantle the barriers to equal opportunity in education/training that undermine the ability to compete on a level playing field, recognizing that education affects future economy security.
 - Employer systems and policy change to increase job retention.
- Reform public benefit system to ameliorate the Benefit Cliff Effect.
- Advance Federal Paid Leave policy and funding.
- Secure federal and state investments in quality, affordable, accessible child care as an essential workforce support:
 - Lead local and state advocacy efforts and drive Empire State Campaign for Child Care and NYS Child Care Availability Task Force agenda asks. This includes child care educator compensation and real cost of care reimbursement.
 - Inform and support Erie County LiveWell working families committee addressing child care
 - Participate in a leadership role on Senator Gillibrand's child care task force
- Support efforts to strengthen NYS child tax credit (Working Families Tax Credit)



GET INVOLVED

JOIN WOMEN IN ACTION



Our Women in Action group is grassroots, accessible, and activist. Receive monthly calls to action on issues affecting women and gender minorities in Western New York, New York State, and the entire country.

Learn more at wnywomensfoundation.org.

SUPPORT WITH AN INDIVIDUAL GIFT



Individual donations to the Foundation provide support for our critical advocacy work and can be targeted to directly benefit the programs that matter most to you.

Donate today at wnywomensfoundation.org.

FOLLOW US

The WNY Women's Foundation is active on social media and following us is a fantastic way to stay informed and involved in our work.



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