2016

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

2016 Report on the Status of Women in Westchester

December 2016

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2

VISION STATEMENT 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4

THE FACES OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER . . . 5

HIGHLIGHTS 6

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY 8

FINANCIAL WELL BEING FOR WOMEN 9

- OVERVIEW 9
- WOMEN AND POVERTY 10
- EDUCATION AND EARNINGS 14
- WAGE DISPARITY 19
- WAGES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY 20
- UNEMPLOYMENT 21
- ACCESS TO CAPITAL 23
- WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES 24
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL WELL BEING FOR WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY 26

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP 28

- OVERVIEW 28
- WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICIALS BY GENDER, 2015 29
- WOMEN IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP 31
- WOMEN IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR 32
- POLITICAL PARTICIPATION/VOTING 35
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP BY WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER 37

WOMEN AND HEALTH 38

- OVERVIEW 38
- FEMALE HEALTH INDICATORS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY 39
- PRENATAL CARE, BIRTHWEIGHT AND DEATH . 40
- CAUSES OF DEATH BY SEX, RACE AND ETHNICITY 41
- TEENAGE PREGNANCY 42
- ABORTION RATES 43
- HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE 44
- THE MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN 45
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE THE MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER 47
- SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH 48
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER 50

THE SOCIAL AND LEGAL WELLBEING OF WOMEN 51

- OVERVIEW 51
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 52
- INCARCERATION OF WOMEN 58
- IMPRISONMENT AND FAMILIES 58
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL AND LEGAL WELL BEING OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER 59

WOMEN AND HOUSING 60

- OVERVIEW 60
- HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN WESTCHESTER . . 61
- HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN NY STATE 63
- ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAIR AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING 64

FAMILY CARE 65

- OVERVIEW 65
- THE STATUS OF CHILDREN 66
- UNAFFORDABLE CHILD CARE 68
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO MAKE CHILD CARE AFFORDABLE FOR WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER 70
- ELDER CARE 71
- KINSHIP CARE 72
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION IN SUPPORT OF KINSHIP CARE 74

THE FACES OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER . . . 75

ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS 77

END NOTES 89

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Additional contributions of content were provided by the Child Care Council of Westchester, the Family Service Society of Yonkers, the Housing Action Council, Marianna Stout of the League of Women Voters, the Mental Health Association of Westchester, NY State Assembly Member Shelley Mayer, Planned Parenthood of Hudson Peconic, Robi Schlaff (Westchester County Office for Women), the Women's Enterprise Development Center, Westchester Jewish Community Services, and Noelle Damico and Antoinette Klatzky, Co-chairs of the Westchester Women's Agenda.

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VISION STATEMENT

The Westchester Women's Agenda (WWA) commissioned the ***2016 Report on the Status of Women in Westchester*** to report on the social and economic status of women, and to further a climate that offers equal access and opportunity for women in Westchester County, New York.

The WWA is a feminist organization that serves as a strong voice for women in Westchester on legislative policy and program issues by bringing together more than 50 nonprofits, individuals and corporations who work together and advocate on behalf of issues affecting women in Westchester County.

The WWA seeks equal rights and economic equality for women, champions reproductive freedom and access to healthcare, works to end violence against women, supports civil rights for all and opposes racism and bigotry.

Not only do these issues intersect to determine a woman's ability to thrive in Westchester, but they also determine the County's ability to thrive as a whole. As budget cuts threaten to pull support from initiatives that support women, the ***2016 Report on the Status of Women in Westchester*** is more important than ever.

In 2016, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, together with other foundations and partners across governments and nonprofits committed to addressing the gender data gap and agreed upon a new statement of principles that stress the importance of data for accelerating development outcomes.

"Data holds power: It demonstrates the size and nature of social or economic problems, and brings clarity around who is falling through the cracks. Through reliable data, women and girls' lives become visible and counted, helping to inform programming and hold leaders to account. However, a lack of comprehensive, current information about women and girls… hinders efforts to advance gender equality". [1]

The ***2016 Report on the Status of Women in Westchester*** aims to provide local data that will create a baseline on issues of concern to women. It is intended to be used in efforts to influence federal, state and local governments, to guide policy and lawmaking and to appeal for funding for programs that align with our action plan.

The report also seeks to inspire the public to join efforts that create progress for women, and thus a better quality of life for everyone in Westchester. We want the community to join us in achieving the goals of our action plan by voting, contacting their elected representatives, getting involved in efforts prescribed in our plan and making their voices heard.

Our report engages all of these stakeholders so we may collectively move toward finding solutions and to achieve parity for women in Westchester. We hope that you find the ***2016 Report on the Status of Women in Westchester*** useful and that it serves as an inspiration for other counties to pursue progress for women.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Living in Westchester we all know that our lives are interdependent. What happens to some of us has consequences for all of us. Yet we also know— and the data in this Report show— that as a County we face great challenges. Our housing is limited, and it has become unaffordable for many of the people who work here. Their choices are few. They must either live in crowded, unsafe conditions or travel long distances to get to and from work.

Women in particular are faced with the most difficult of choices. They are "sandwiched" between caring for their children and caring for their aging parents. In order to work, they must pay for child care; which is also relatively unaffordable. Their ability to get the education and training they need to start new businesses and to contribute to the local economy and to their own financial well-being is constricted.

All of these issues are interrelated. They are issues faced by real people, our friends and neighbors, the people who staff our stores and provide the services on which we depend. Women age 45-54 represent the demographic most likely to live in poverty. Not surprisingly, birth rates in Westchester have declined.

While educational levels have improved for both men and women and the educational levels of women now exceed those of men, at every level of education, women still make less money than men. In addition, for the five most common occupations in the County, women who work full time still make less than comparable male employees.

There is a growing financial divide between those with a college or graduate school education and those who have not completed college. While three of the seven largest corporations in the County are now headed by women, both men and women at lower levels of education have seen their incomes decrease over the last five years.

There are striking disparities between Caucasian women and women of color — regardless of educational attainment — when it comes to health, earnings, and leadership in business and public office. Further, the ability of women of color to obtain adequate housing for themselves and their families is severely constrained not only by the dramatic shortage of affordable housing units but also because of the persistence of exclusionary zoning in the County.

We have tried to show that the issues that women face are interconnected. We believe that Westchester can do better at meeting the needs of all of its citizens. We believe that Westchester can do better at creating opportunities for women from diverse backgrounds and all socioeconomic levels to overcome their disadvantages and to share in the abundance that a welcoming and inclusive County affords. We have made recommendations for actions that will bring about the change that Westchester needs and deserves.

We must broaden and deepen the conversation around these issues. We welcome the participation of everyone who cares about the quality of the life that we share in Westchester to join us in this conversation and help us take action. We hope that this Report will provide a baseline, a focus and a data-based starting point for that conversation and that action.

"I'VE ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING IN TWO YEARS THAT I NEVER HAD BEFORE."

Lena is a woman who projects a quiet humility and fortitude. After 35 years of substance abuse, incarceration and estrangement from her family, Lena resolved to get her life back on track. YWCA's Awakenings program at the Women's Residence provided the structure for Lena to do just that. "When I was in jail, I heard about YWCA's Awakenings program: it's a 12-month 7 day a week program, with classes in nutrition, computers, breast cancer awareness, all sorts of things. I had tried everything else; the judge allowed me to give it a shot."

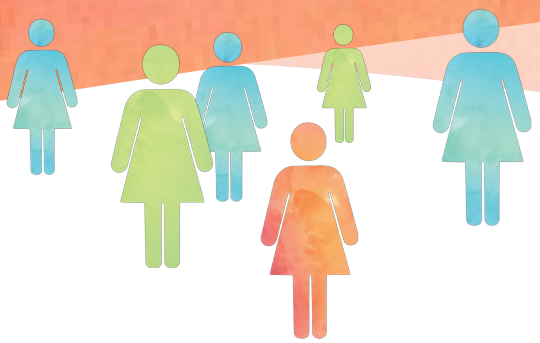
LENA: THE FACES OF WOMEN OF WESTCHESTER

Lena fully immersed herself in the program, attending meetings seven days a week. "I sat up front and did everything the counselors wanted me to do. Then I started helping out, serving lunch, making coffee, learning the things I had forgotten." Her dedication paid off: she has been substance free for two years. Still, she never misses a meeting. "I'm a chairperson in my meetings and I'm going to be treasurer. These people respect me, they see a lot of things that I haven't seen in myself in a long time. They give me a pat on the back, and I realize I can give myself a pat on the back, too."

In the middle of Lena's journey towards sobriety, she received a terrible blow: a breast cancer diagnosis. She attributes her first seeking medical care for a suspicious lump to YWCA's Encore program. Fortunately, her prognosis is good. "It's been very scary but I have the best doctor in the world."

Lena has a lot to stay healthy for: she has re-established her relationship with her children and grandchildren and has hope for the future. "I've accomplished something in two years here that I never had before. Now I have choices."

WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER: HIGHLIGHTS



AGE

BIRTH RATES

POPULATION

The racial/ethnic population in Westchester has changed considerably between the last two Censuses, with the Hispanic population growing substantially.

The population has also aged, and birth rates have declined.

POVERTY

Poverty in Westchester has worsened over the last five years for women, men and families.

Poverty is higher for female-headed families in Westchester, and it has gotten worse.

EDUCATION & INCOME

Educational levels have improved over the last five years, for both women and men.

The educational levels of women now slightly exceed those of men; however, at all levels of education, women still make less money than men.

For those at lower levels of education, median salaries for both women and men have decreased over the last five years.

Even in direct comparisons by occupation, for the five most common occupations in the county, income differentials for full time workers still favor men.

WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Men outnumber women as Westchester County officials by a factor of 1.7 to 1.

Of the seven largest corporations headquartered Westchester County, three are headed by women.

The percentage of women in executive leadership positions in the largest seven corporations headquartered in Westchester County is 32%. Of the 10 largest nonprofit organizations in Westchester, three are headed by women. Women hold 78% of senior leadership positions, but only 30% of CEO positions.

Women are more likely than men to be registered to vote. They are also more likely to vote.

More women need to run for elected offices.

WOMEN & HEALTH

White women have the lowest percentage of premature deaths and the highest rate of adequate prenatal care.

Black women have the highest rates of female breast cancer mortality.

Teenage pregnancy rates for 18-19 year olds have declined substantially over the last 10 years. Rates vary substantially by race and ethnicity.

The number of new cases of Chlamydia continues to rise. Chlamydia can make it difficult or even impossible for a woman to become pregnant.

Depression is by far the most common clinical mental health diagnosis among women.

FAMILY CARE

The cost of child care in Westchester represents a huge financial burden for families of modest income. In 2015 the mean cost of Westchester center-based care for infants was just under $20,000; toddler care about $17,600; preschool care about $15,300 and school age care just over $10,000.

The number of people in the Hudson Valley aged 60 or older is twice as high as the national average, representing a looming crisis, especially for women "sandwiched" between taking care of their children and aging parents.

Kinship families are among Westchester's most vulnerable populations who continue to experience the adverse effects of the recent economic crisis and the decreased state, county and local funding of social service programs.

SOCIAL & LEGAL WELL BEING OF WOMEN

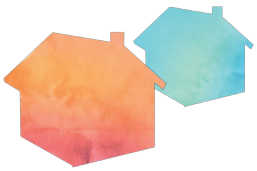
There exists a large unmet demand for services for domestic violence victims.

Female incarceration rates have declined steadily since their peak in 1991.

WOMEN & HOUSING

Half or more of Westchester County's renters live in housing which costs more than what the Federal government considers affordable (a maximum of 30% of their income).

More children live in poverty in Westchester now than they did five years ago.



SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The population of Westchester has been changing steadily over the last two decades. The ethnic/racial composition has changed, with a substantial increase in the Hispanic population. While the gender composition has remained relatively stable, the birth rate has declined, and the population has aged. This presents added burdens for women, who are typically the caregivers for both their dependent children and their aging parents.

POPULATION

Between the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census the population of Westchester grew by **2.78%**, from 923,441 to 949,113.

During that time period the racial/ethnic population mix changed significantly.

- The White population declined by 1.88%, from 71.35% to 68.11%.
- The Black population grew by 5.33%, from 14.2% to 14.55%.
- The Hispanic/Latino population grew by 43.66%, from 15.61% to 21.81%.

The gender composition of the population remained relatively stable.

- The female population increased by 2.23%, but declined relative to men — from 52.17% in 2000 to 51.89% in 2010.
- The male population increased by 3.38%, going from 47.83% of the population to 48.11%.

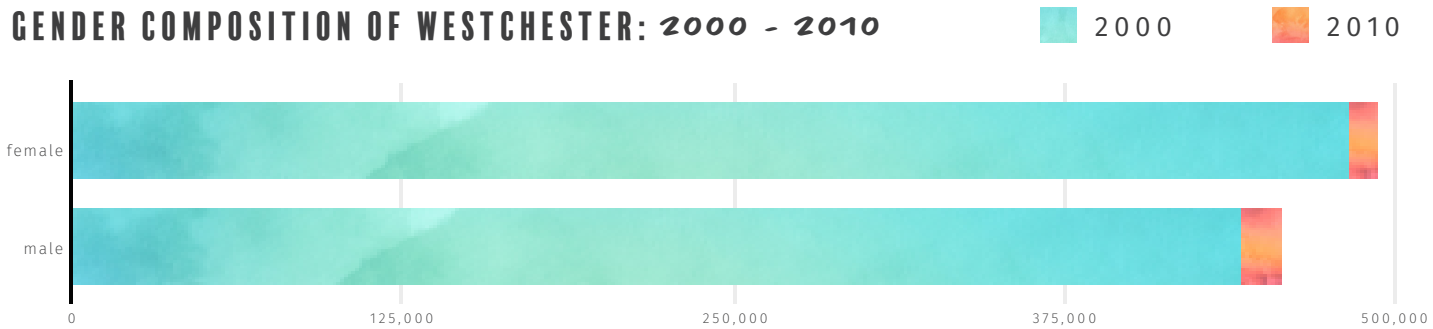
The population aged.

- Children age 0-4 years declined by 10.96%, from 6.96% to 6.03%.
- People of 5-17 years increased by 2.55%, but declined slightly relative to other age groups, from 18.04% to 18%.
- Persons 18-64 years increased by 3.25%, from 61.04% to 61.32%.
- Persons 65 years and over increased 7.88%, from 13.97% to 14.66%. [2]

The birth rate declined.

- Between 2005 and 2014 the birth rate per 1000 population declined steadily, from 12.8 in 2005 to 10.9 in 2014. [3]

GENDER COMPOSITION OF WESTCHESTER: *2000 - 2010*



FINANCIAL WELL BEING OF WOMEN: OVERVIEW

POVERTY

Although poverty has increased for women, men and families in Westchester over the last five years, women are more likely than men to live in poverty. Blacks and Hispanics are more likely than Whites to live in poverty, and young people are more likely to live in poverty than their elders.

ACCESS TO CAPITAL

The most important factor in securing access to capital is a good credit score. In general, men have better credit scores than women. However, we do not have data specific to Westchester.

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

The percentage of women-owned businesses in Westchester is slightly lower than the national average.

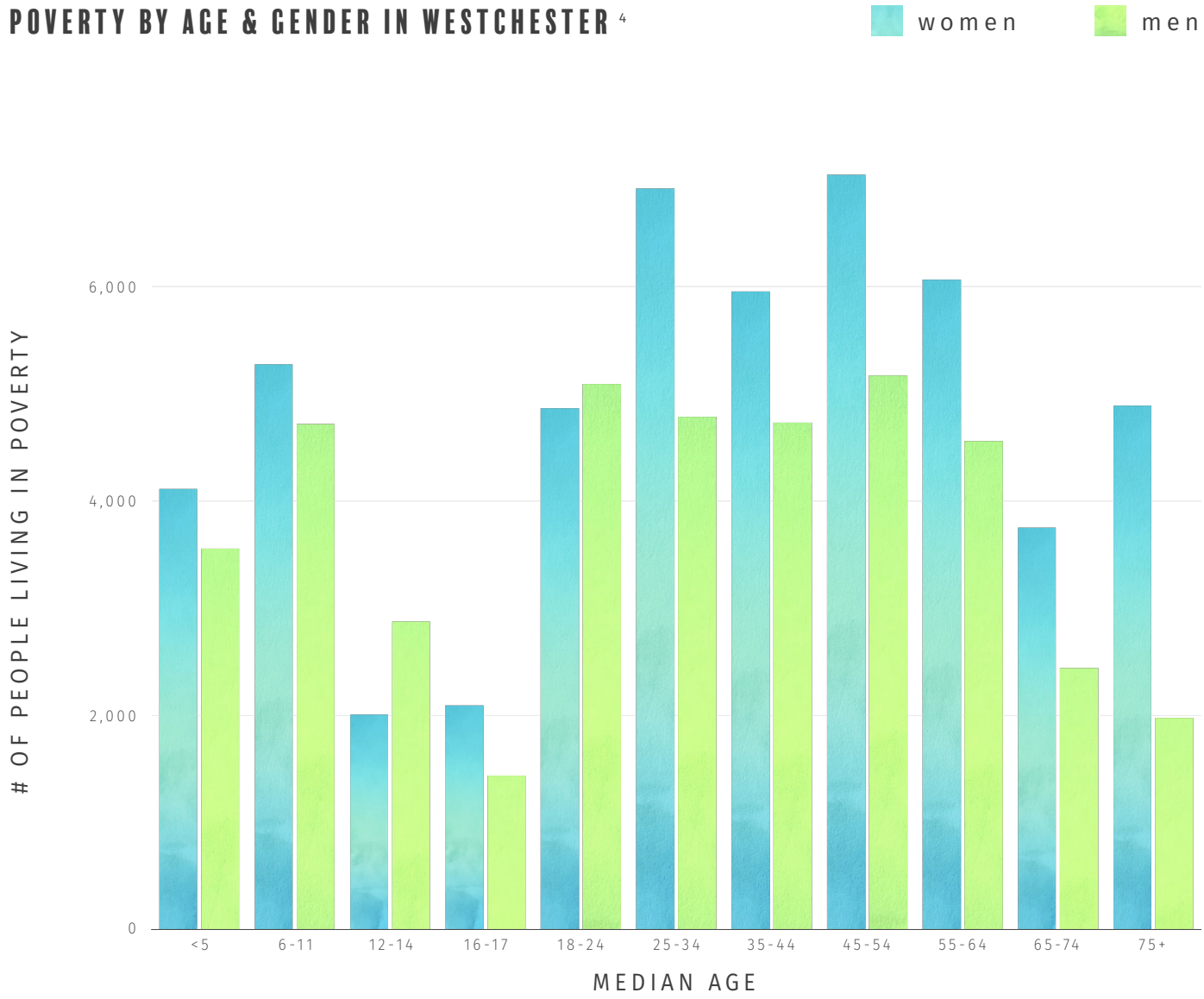
EDUCATION & EARNINGS

Even though the educational levels of women now slightly exceed those of men, women in Westchester—even those working full time in comparable occupations—still make less than men. Overall, median incomes have stagnated over the last five years. Young people (ages 16-24) are far more likely to be unemployed than older people in Westchester County, and Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to be unemployed than Whites. For those with less than a high school diploma, salaries have actually decreased over the last five years; whereas for those with a college education or more, salaries have increased; showing the bifurcation in the economy which is occurring nationally as well. New York is the only state in the nation where millennial women earn more than millennial men.

WOMEN & POVERTY IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Women age 45-54 represent the largest demographic **living in poverty**.

POVERTY BY AGE & GENDER IN WESTCHESTER [4]



NOTE: Throughout this report, unless otherwise noted, we are using Census definitions of poverty, which vary by size of household and are adjusted annually. For example, in 2015 the poverty threshold for a family of four was $24,257. For more information on poverty thresholds, see *http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html*

Women in Westchester are **more likely than men** to live in poverty.[5]

At every level of poverty the percentage of women is higher than that of men.

% OF	<50%	<100%	<125%
WOMEN	4.6%	10.3%	13.7%
MEN	3.6%	8.8%	11.9%

PERCENT OF POVERTY LEVEL IN 2014

Poverty **has worsened** over the last five years for both women and men in Westchester.[6]

% OF	<50%	<100%	<125%
WOMEN	4.0%	8.9%	11.9%
MEN	3.0%	6.8%	9.3%

PERCENT OF POVERTY LEVEL IN 2009

Poverty has worsened **for families** in Westchester.

Over the five-year period from 2009 to 2014, the percentage of families below the poverty level has increased from 5.4% to 6.9%.

More than 10% of Westchester families live in poverty, and that percentage has increased over the last five years. For families with children under 18 years, the percentage in poverty has increased from 8.3% to 10.3%.

Poverty is higher for female-headed families in Westchester, and it **has gotten worse.**[7]

POVERTY RATE 2009 VS. 2014

FOR:	2014	2009
FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS	20.0%	17.9%
MARRIED COUPLES	4.3%	3.1%
FAMILIES HEADED BY WOMEN WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18	28.1%	24.9%

THESE FIGURES ARE PARTICULARLY STRIKING CONSIDERING THAT 2009 WAS CONSIDERED TO BE THE DEPTHS OF THE GREAT RECESSION.

POVERTY BY RACE (2014)

= 2% OF TOTAL POPULATION

= LIVING IN POVERTY

WHITES

BLACKS

HISPANICS OR LATINOS

Blacks and Hispanics in Westchester are **far more likely** to live in poverty.

POVERTY RATE IN 2014 (RACE)

FOR:	% IN POVERTY
WHITES	6.1%
BLACKS	17.1%
HISPANICS OR LATINOS	18.8%

Young people in Westchester are **more likely** to live in poverty than older people.[8]

POVERTY RATE IN 2014 (AGE)

FOR AGES:	% IN POVERTY
UNDER 18 YEARS	12.3%
18-64 YEARS	9.0%
65+ YEARS	7.4%

EDUCATION & EARNINGS

THE GOOD NEWS:

Education levels in Westchester have improved.[9]

The good news is that educational levels have improved for both men and women; and that *women have caught up with — **and now slightly exceed** — the educational levels of men.*

	LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA		BACHELOR'S DEGREE	
% OF	2014	2009	2014	2009
WOMEN	88.5%	78.5%	46.5%	25.4%
MEN	86.6%	79.7%	45.5%	38.4%

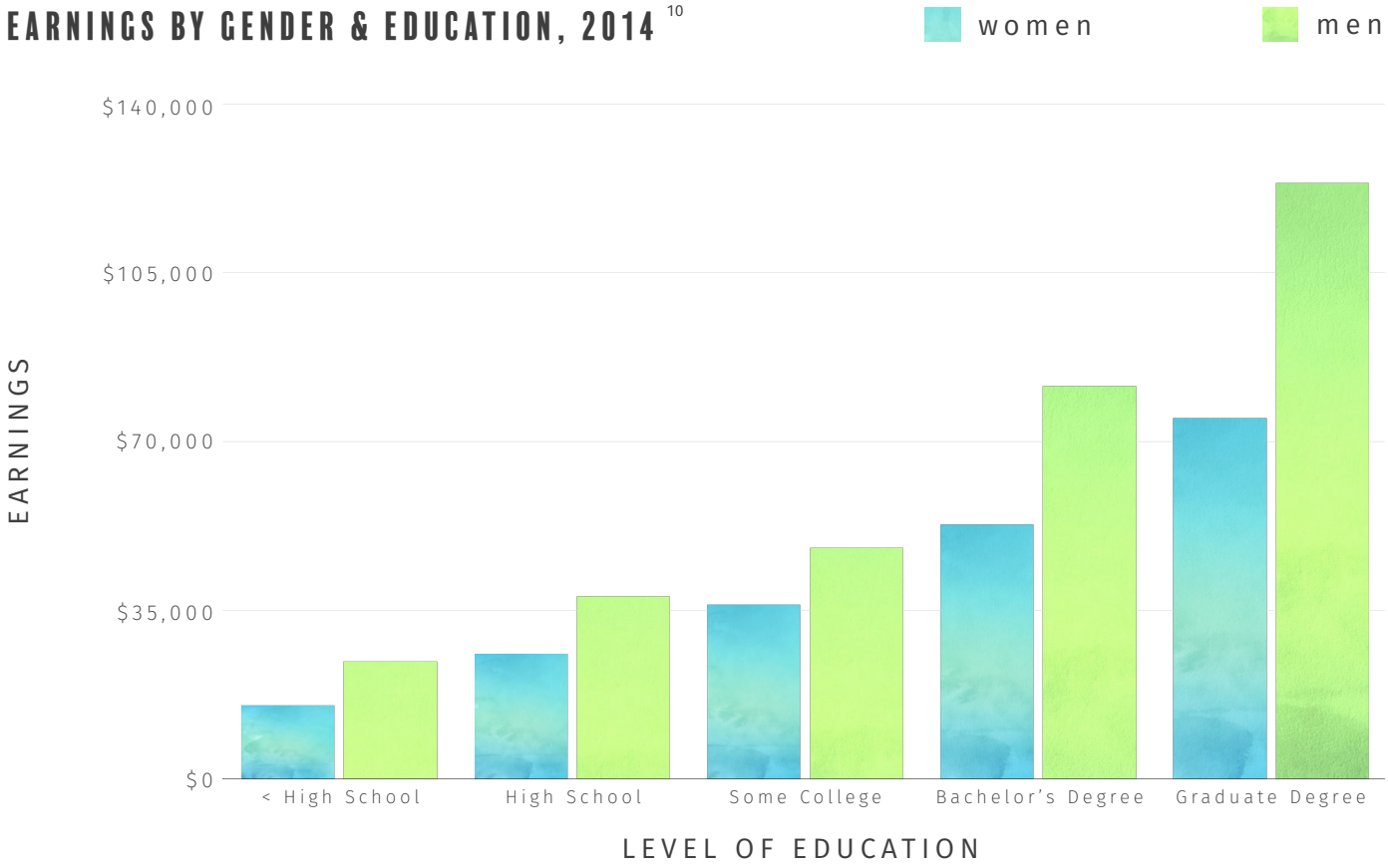
In 2014, **88.5%** of women have at least a high school diploma, as compared to **86.6%** of men. This compares favorably to 2009, when **78.5%** of women had a high school education, as did **79.7%** of men.

The same is true for those with at least a bachelor's degree. In 2014, **46.5%** of women have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to **45.5%** of men. In 2009, the comparable percentages were **25.4%** for women and **38.4%** for men.

THE BAD NEWS:

At all levels of education, women in Westchester make less money than men.

EARNINGS BY GENDER & EDUCATION, 2014 [10]



In 2014 the median earnings for women aged 25 years and over were $42,895. For comparable men, median earnings were $59,433.

For those with less than high school completion, women made $15,241. Men made $24,361.

For those with high school diplomas, women made $25,985. Men made $37,861.

For those with some college or an associate's degree, women made $36,238. Men made $47,985.

For those with a bachelor's degree, women made $52,810. Men made $81,520.

For those with a graduate or professional degree, women made $74,914. Men made $123,599.

The median salary for a woman in Westchester with some college is less than that of the average male high school graduate.

For those with high school education or less, median salaries for both women and men in Westchester have actually ***decreased*** over the five year period from 2009-2014.

EARNINGS BY GENDER & EDUCATION LEVEL, 2009 VS. 2014

	LEVEL OF EDUCATION					
	<H.S. DIPLOMA		H.S. DIPLOMA		SOME COLLEGE	
EARNINGS OF:	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009
WOMEN	$15,241	$15,913	$25,985	$26,977	$36,238	$35,855
MEN	$24,361	$24,598	$37,861	$40,118	$47,985	$50,126

In 2009 women with less than a high school diploma made **$15,913**, on average. In 2014 they made **$15,241**. For men, the comparable figures are **$24,598** and **$24,361**.

Women high school graduates in 2009 had median earnings of **$26,977**; compared to **$25,985** in 2014. For men, the figures are **$40,118** vs. **$37,861**.

At the level of some college or an associate's degree, women's salaries have improved slightly over the period—from **$35,855** in 2009 to **$36,238** in 2014; whereas men's have continued to decrease (**$50,126** to **$47,985**). [11]

Higher education pays off for both men and womenin Westchester. *But the differentials remain striking.*

EARNINGS BY GENDER & EDUCATION LEVEL, 2009 VS. 2014

	LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	BACHELOR'S DEGREE		PROFESSIONAL OR GRADUATE DEGREE	
EARNINGS OF:	2014	2009	2014	2009
WOMEN	$52,810	$50,550	$74,914	$67,433
MEN	$81,520	$79,142	$123,599	$114,402

When you get to the bachelor's degree level both women's and men's salaries show consistent – but slight – improvement. (**$50,550** to **$52,810** for women and **$79,142** to **$81,520** for men).

And for those with a graduate or professional degree, there has been a more substantial increase for both women and men (**$67,433** to **$74,914** for women; **$114,402** to **$123,599** for men). For these women the increase was **11%**; for men it was **8%**. [12]

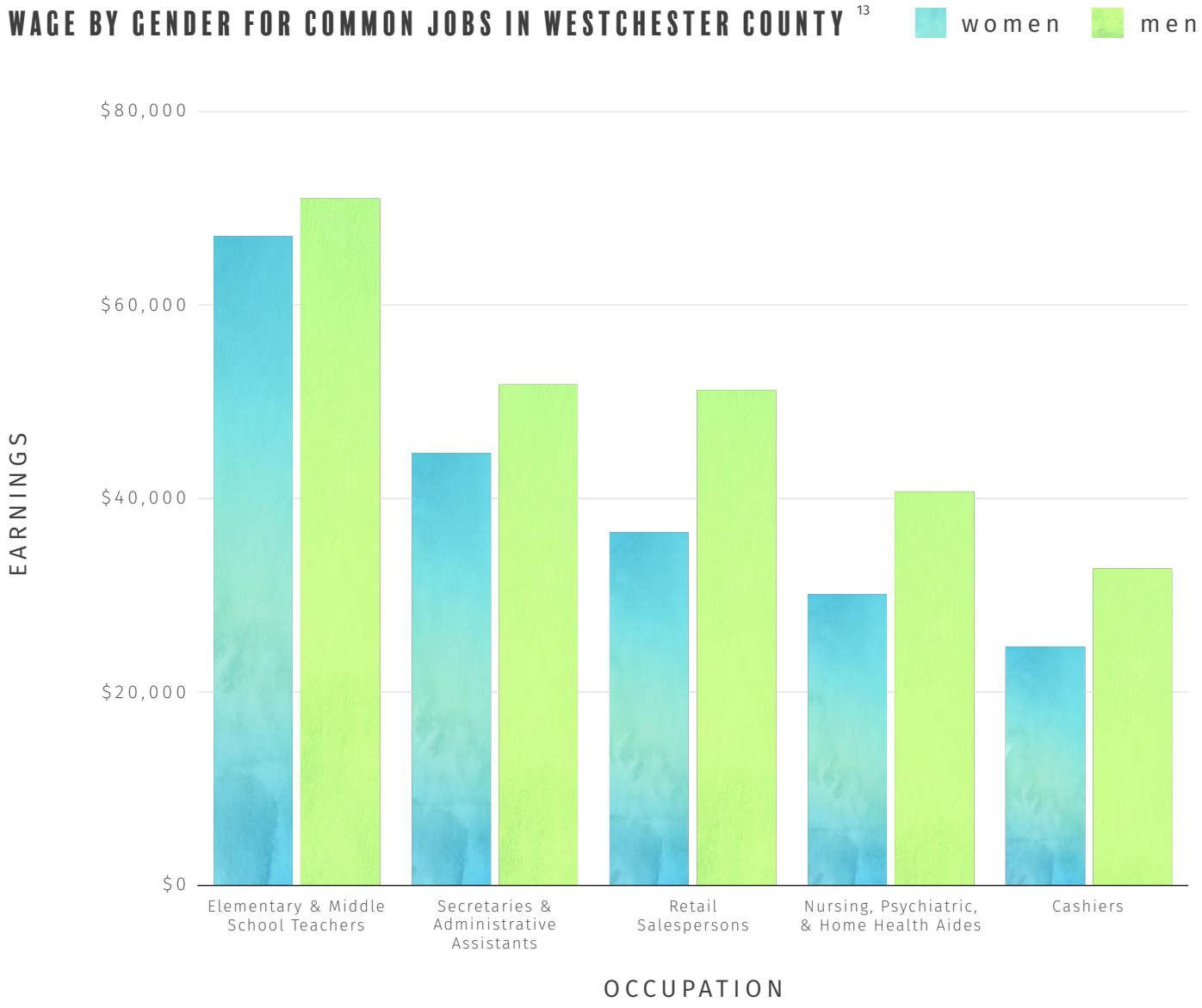
What accounts for these differences?

This is an issue we would like to explore further. Do women work fewer hours? Or do they get paid a lower wage per hour? Or both? Are women more likely to be concentrated in lower-wage industries? Is there still a differential for "men's" vs. "women's" work?

According to DATA USA (which also makes use of Census data), "Male full-time employees in New York make **1.3** times more than Female full-time employees."

And when you compare average ***full-time salaries for the five most common occupations*** in Westchester (i.e., apples to apples) there are still significant differentials between men and women—differentials which favor men.

WAGE BY GENDER FOR COMMON JOBS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY [13]



Overall, median earnings in Westchester have stagnated over the period from 2010-2014.

In 2010 the median earnings per worker in Westchester County were **$42,608**. In 2014, median earnings were **$42,637**. [14]

However, for full-time, year-round workers earnings have increased — for females, by **7.5%**, from **$52,377** to **$56,297**; and for males, by **7.9%**, from **$66,282** to **$71,527**. [15]

WAGE DISPARITY IN NEW YORK STATE

"New York had the narrowest gender wage gap in the nation in 2013, yet women aged 16 and older earned just 87.6 cents on the dollar compared with their male counterparts.

> "If progress toward closing the gender wage gap continues at the current rate since 1960, women in New York will not achieve equal pay until the year 2049."
>
> — *Economic Status of Women in New York State,* Institute for Women's Policy Research [16]

STEM PROGRESS

Westchester County and the Hudson Valley region are making significant investments in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. As highlighted in the recent 2016 White House Council on Women and Girls report on Advancing Equity, there are significant opportunity gaps in STEM education and careers for women, especially for women and girls of color. The growth of STEM jobs is expected to outpace non-STEM jobs over the next ten years. It is imperative to engage historically underrepresented groups, including women and girls, in STEM to open additional economic opportunities and to meet growing workplace demands.

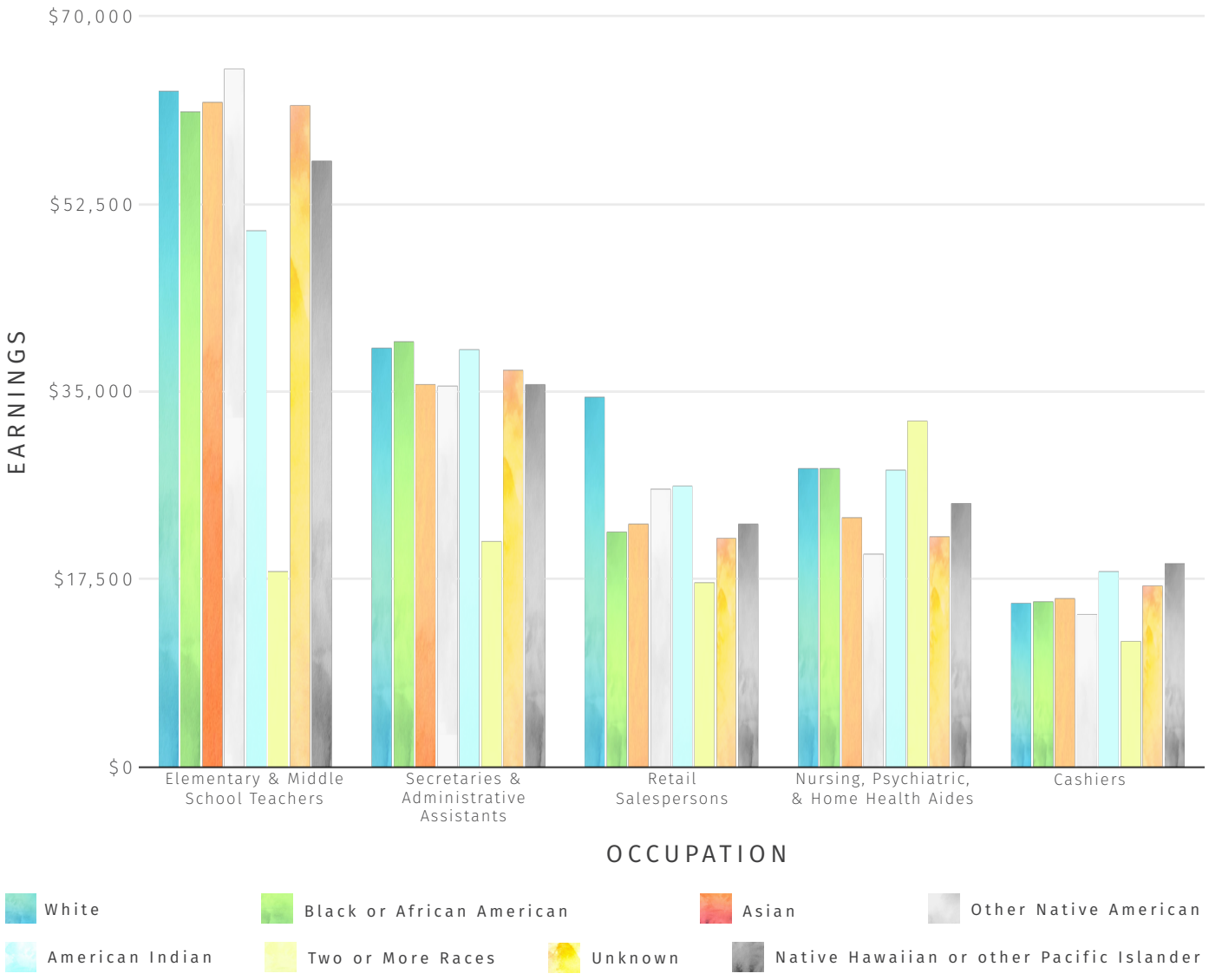
A MILLENNIAL EXCEPTION IN NEW YORK

New York is the only state in the nation where millennial women earn more than millennial men. "Median annual earnings for women aged 16 to 34 in the state are $38,319, compared with $37,542 for men of the same age range for full time, year-round work." (Ibid.) As we have noted, this probably is due to the fact that women are taking advantage of higher education in greater numbers.

WAGES IN WESTCHESTER GREW SLIGHTLY OVER THE LAST YEAR.

According to a *report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, wages in Westchester grew by 1.2 percent between the second quarter of 2015 and the second quarter of 2016, below the national average. [17]

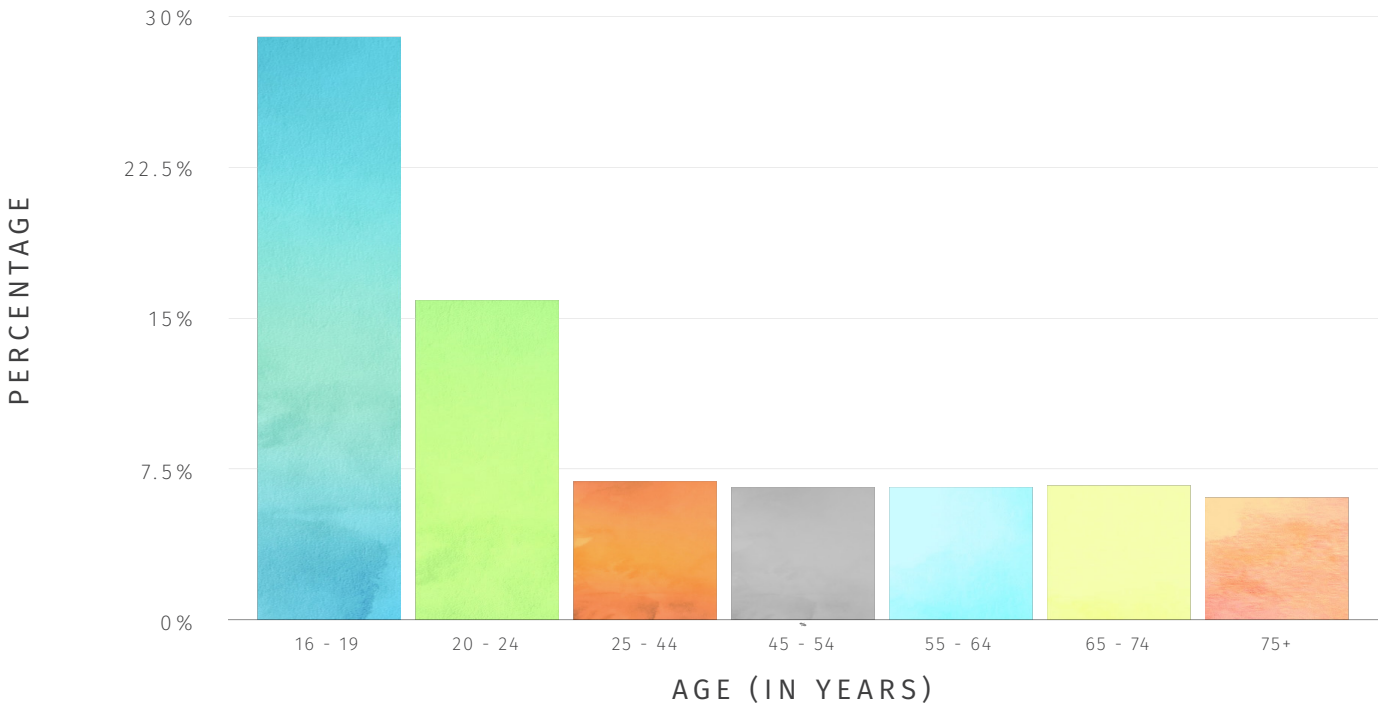
WAGE BY RACE & ETHNICITY FOR COMMON JOBS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY [18]



UNEMPLOYMENT

Young people are far more likely to be unemployed than older people in Westchester County.

UNEMPLOYMENT BY AGE IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY (2014)



Unemployment Rates are higher for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites in Westchester County.[19]

UNEMPLOYMENT BY RACE & ETHNICITY

FOR:	% UNEMPLOYED
WHITES	7.0%
BLACKS	12.4%
HISPANICS OR LATINOS	9.5%

APPRENTICESHIPS

The WWA was not able to obtain information about the percent of women in Westchester who benefit from apprenticeships. Even though women nationally make up only 6% of all apprentices, and only 3% of high wage fields like construction, apprenticeships represent an opportunity to increase financial security for women and their families, earning approximately $1.2 million more in a lifetime than traditional female employment. [20]

ACCESS TO CAPITAL

Access to capital matters!

> "Access to capital is essential for individuals to acquire assets and build wealth. Without access to capital it is impossible to buy a home, create a small business, or possibly get an education. The most important factor in securing access to capital is a strong credit score.
>
> While income per se has no influence on an individual's credit score, income inconsistencies may affect the things that do influence the score, like on time payments, amount of available credit used, etc. Wealth is not what drives the credit score—a person with a modest income can have as good a score (or better) than a person with a high income."
>
> — Kim Jacobs, Executive Director, Community Capital New York

The most important factors impacting access to capital are **credit scores, income and collateral**.

The following points are worth noting:

- Consumer Action – a nonprofit consumer advocacy and educational organization states "Men have lower debt to income ratios compared to women and this affects women's access to capital."
- A gender report from Credit Sesame data shows that "as a group, men have better credit scores than women. Among our members, the average credit score for men is 630 compared to 621 for women."
- One explanation for this differential is that men tend to have worked steadily throughout their careers while many women have taken time off to raise their families. This results in income inconsistencies that effect credit worthiness.
- Women also tend to use more of the credit that's available to them than men. "59% of our female members use more than 70% of their available credit, compared to 57% of men. Meanwhile, 28% of men use less than 30% of their total credit, and only 25% of women are in this enviable position." Ibid.
- Women tend have a HIGHER credit utilization rate (they use more credit that's available to them than men). Higher credit utilization rates pull down credit scores.
- In general credit scores tend to improve with age – STILL in all groups men's scores are better than women. [21]

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

2012 data reveal that the percentage of women-owned businesses in Westchester is slightly less than the national percentage.

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS: WESTCHESTER VS. U.S., 2014 [22]

IN:	# OF WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS	% OF WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS
WESTCHESTER	39,870	34.8%
UNITED STATES	9,878,397	35.8%

An issue statement from Anne Janiak, Executive Director of the Women's Enterprise Development Center, follows:

> "According to the 2016 State of Women-Owned Business Report by American Express, there are more than 11.3 million women-owned businesses in the U.S. that employ nearly 9 million people and generate over $1.6 trillion in revenues. Revenues among these women-owned businesses have increased 35% since 2007 as compared to 27% among U.S. firms. The global incomes of women are predicted to reach $18 trillion by 2018. It is also estimated that women drive 70-80% of all consumer purchasing through a combination of influence and buying power.
>
> While these numbers are encouraging and demonstrate the recent growth in women's entrepreneurship, women business owners are still not reaching their full potential. Consider these facts:
>
> - Women-owned businesses still generate only about 25% of the annual revenues generated by male-owned businesses.
> - Only 1.8% of women-owned businesses reach the $1 million mark in annual revenues.
> - Women account for only 16% of conventional small business loans and receive only 4.4% of the total dollar value for loans.

One way to assist in the growth of women business owners is to make sure they receive the small business training and counseling they need to build sustainable enterprises. Studies

show that these training programs work. According to the Aspen Institute's Field program, when business owners receive such support, they are 80% likely to remain in business in five years, and are more likely to hire an additional two employees. Other studies have shown that households with a woman microbusiness owner earn an average of $13,000 more than households with only wage earners. That amount of money can make a difference in those families' lives by providing for housing and/or college education for a child.

With many women still experiencing income disparity, promoting women's economic equality through small business ownership is a goal worth pursuing since it will benefit not only the women entrepreneurs and their families but also our economy. Bottom line – improving the environment for women-owned businesses is good for the economy and good for all of us." [23]

"ONE WAY TO ASSIST IN THE GROWTH OF WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS IS TO MAKE SURE THEY RECEIVE THE SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING & COUNSELING THEY NEED TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL WELL BEING FOR WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

The WWA should adopt the following recommended actions some of which have been put forth by the Institute for Women's Policy and Research (IWPR) to improve women's economic status in New York State and Westchester County:

1. Hold employers accountable for obligation to monitor hiring, selection and promotions and review pay and promotion decisions to identify gender and race disparities. Make receipt of public contracts conditional on contractors' reviewing their pay and promotion systems to make sure they are gender neutral and equitably reward skills, efforts and responsibility.
2. Develop new legislation to address barriers to equality such as lack of work/family supports and the unequal treatment of part-time workers.
3. Facilitate access to further education by providing supports for those who face financial and other barriers to completing a degree, such as access to childcare.
4. Ensure that career advice for women and girls explicitly addresses the earnings potential of different field of study and occupations, especially in the STEM fields. Increase opportunities for women to pursue careers in higher-paying technical fields, and monitor vocational training programs to ensure that there is active outreach and support for women pursuing nontraditional careers. (IWPR – Economic Status of Women in New York State, p. 11 – 12)
5. Westchester County and other employers in the County should follow the example of New York City which by Executive Order forbids City agencies from inquiring about an applicant's salary history before extending a conditional offer of employment. By eliminating questions regarding an applicant's previous compensation—which is often used as a benchmark from which to determine starting pay in a new position—employers take a vital step to stop perpetuating a cycle of suppressed wages for women and people of color within the workforce.
6. Ensure that federal, state and local government contracts are accessible to women-owned businesses, and make public and private sector investments in loan and entrepreneurial programs that expand small business opportunities for all. Increase technical assistance to women entrepreneurs that helps them to identify opportunities for successful and profitable businesses. (*Economic Status of Women in New York State,* Institute for Women's Policy Research, pg. 11 - 12)

STEM — Companies in Westchester that benefit from economic development investment programs should be required to invest in STEM education and outreach to women and girls. Model programs include the YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester's TechGYrls initiative, which teaches robotics and coding to African American and Latina girls and Sister to Sister International's STEAM Academy for Black and Latina girls that develops a pipeline from middle school to college and careers.

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES — Westchester County should improve opportunities for women business owners by:

1. Providing greater access to business training, counseling, and mentoring programs that help women and other small business owners grow sustainable enterprises.
2. Supporting programs to assist entrepreneurs, and women in particular, to achieve annual revenue growth beyond $1 million.
3. Providing greater access to contracting opportunities for M/WBEs from both the public and private sectors.
4. Expanding and supporting opportunities for all small business owners to access capital to grow their businesses.

EQUAL PAY — WWA should sponsor an Equal Pay pledge and honor companies that demonstrate and pledge to give women equal pay .

NOTE: Individual and organizational members of the Westchester Women's Agenda are responsible for the Recommendations for Action presented throughout this Report. They are intended to provide the impetus for focused conversations on solutions to the challenges that women face in the County.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: *OVERVIEW*

Men outnumber women as Westchester County officials by a factor of 1.7 to 1. More women need to run for elected offices. Three of the top seven Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Westchester are headed by women. Of these companies, 32% of the leadership positions are occupied by women. On the national level, women CEOs and women heads of nonprofits continue to be paid less than men.

More registered voters are Democrats than Republicans in Westchester County, and women are more likely to be registered to vote than men. Women are also more likely to vote.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICIALS BY GENDER, 2015

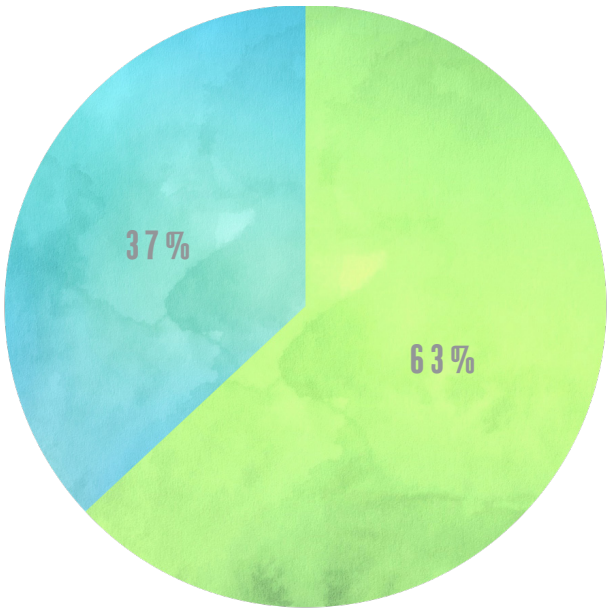
Men outnumber women as Westchester County Officials by a factor of 1.7 to 1.[24]

	MALE	FEMALE
WESTCHESTER COUNTY GOVERNMENT: EXECUTIVE BRANCH	—	—
ELECTED OFFICIALS	2	1
COMMISSIONERS & DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS	17	7
OTHER DIRECTORS	4	2
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE	5	3
OTHER COUNTY OFFICIALS	25	12
BOARDS CREATED UNDER STATE LAW	1	2
AD HOC CITIZENS BOARDS	3	1
ORGANIZATIONS NOT MANDATED BY LAW	2	1
WESTCHESTER COUNTY GOVERNMENT: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH	—	—
COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS	10	7
SENIOR SUPPORT STAFF	3	2
JUDICIARY	—	—
NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT	15	6
ASSOCIATE JUSTICE, APPELLATE DIVISION, SECOND DEPARTMENT	3	1
NEW YORK STATE SURROGATE COURT	1	0
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR	0	1
NEW YORK STATE COURT OF CLAIMS	2	0
COUNTY COURT	4	4
WHITE PLAINS FAMILY COURT	0	5
YONKERS FAMILY COURT	2	1
NEW ROCHELLE FAMILY COURT	0	1
COMMISSIONER OF JURORS	0	1
TOTALS	99	58

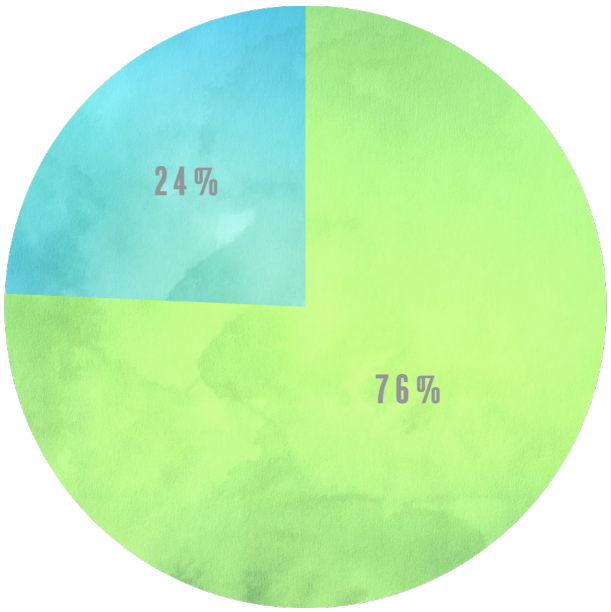
According to NYS Assemblymember Shelley Mayer:

"As a Yonkers representative in the NYS Assembly, I see many terrific people, especially women, working tirelessly to improve their communities, schools and advocate on issues of importance. Yet, these same strong women are often reluctant to participate in the electoral process — to throw their hats in the ring for elected office. Their experiences and perspectives are invaluable, and it is essential that the political process benefit from their formal participation — running and serving in elected office. We have a lot to gain from their perspectives and experiences, and elected office offers an essential facet of the effort to improve our communities and expand opportunity."

GENDER REPRESENTATION FOR COUNTY OFFICIALS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY



GENDER REPRESENTATION FOR CORPORATE LEADERSHIP IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY



women men

WOMEN IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

For the seven largest Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Westchester County, three of them (IBM, PepsiCo and ITT) are headed by women.

For these seven companies, the average percentage of women in leadership positions is **32%**.

Their most recent Annual Reports and websites indicate the following gender composition of their senior executives:

COMPANY:	MALE SENIOR EXECUTIVES	FEMALE SENIOR EXECUTIVES
IBM	13	4
PEPSICO	19	10
ITT	4	3
CONSOLIDATED EDISON	9	4
REGENERON	14	1
MORGAN STANLEY	14	2
MASTERCARD	8	2
TOTALS	81	26

Women CEOS earn less than men.[25]

On the national level, women in CEO positions generally earn less than men.

In the US, women currently hold 23 (or 4%) CEO positions and 19.2% of board seats at S&P 500 companies. Women of color face an even wider gap. Women of color hold only 3.2 % of the board seats of the S&P 500 and more than 2/3 of these companies have no women of color as board directors at all. Companies with a high representation of women board members significantly outperformed those with no female directors, according to a 2011 Catalyst analysis of financial results at Fortune 500 companies.[26]

Women on average ask for 30% less money than males when being offered a position and ask for raises and promotions 85% less often than their male counterparts.[27]

WOMEN IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

The nonprofit sector is Westchester's largest industry in terms of employment.

For more data on Westchester County nonprofits, see the excellent new report, released in March, 2014 by the Nonprofit Economic Data Project in collaboration with Nonprofit Westchester with funding from the Westchester Community Foundation, from which the data to the right was obtained.

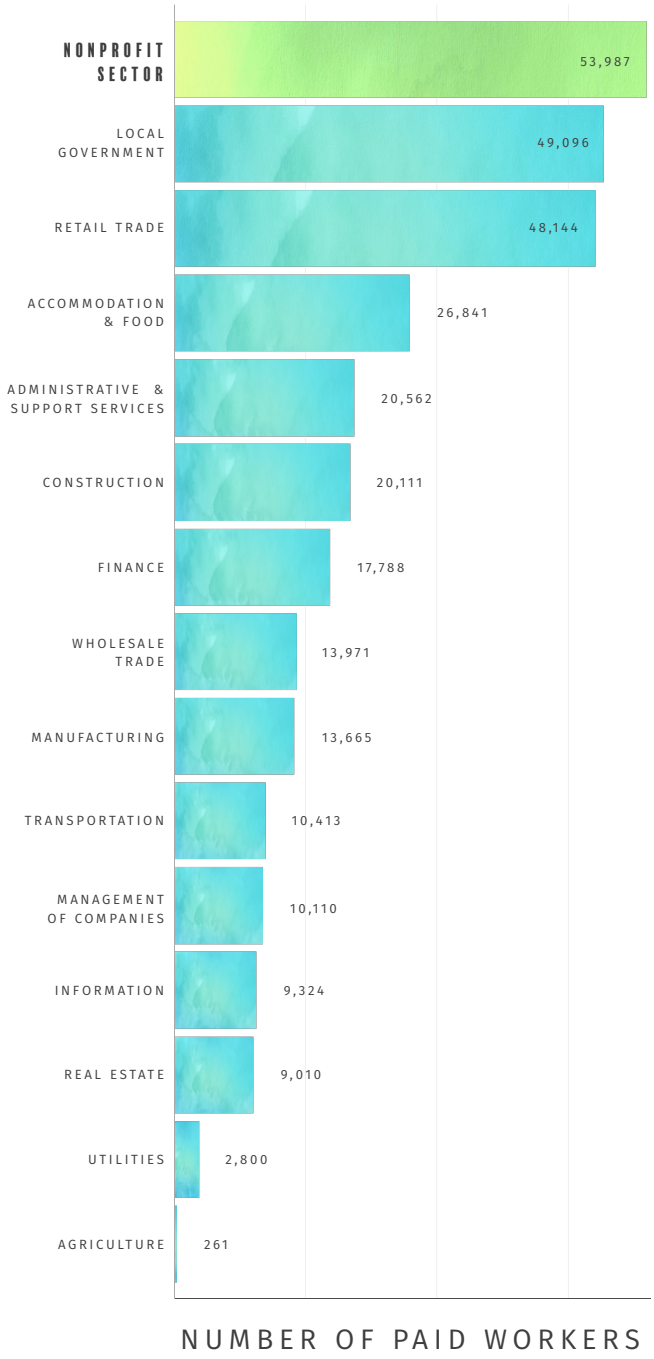
According to this report, the nonprofit sector employs 13.6% of the county's total workforce:

> "putting Westchester County well above the national average of 8.4 percent, and slightly above nearby Nassau County (13.5%) and New York City (13.1%). When we remove public sector workers from the analysis, we find that the sector employs an even more remarkable **16 percent** of the private workforce – that's **1 out of every 6** private workers in the county. This makes clear the hugely important role that the nonprofit sector plays in the economic life of the county."

The data in this report show that wages for Westchester nonprofit workers are lower than those for for-profit and government workers and that the highest monthly average wages occur in the hospital field. However, these data are not broken out by gender.

NONPROFIT EMPLOYMENT VS. EMPLOYMENT IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES,

WESTCHESTER COUNTY, 2013



Of the 10 largest nonprofit organizations in Westchester, three are headed by women. Women hold 78% of senior leadership positions, but only 30% of CEO positions.

Their most recent Annual Reports and websites indicate the following gender composition of their senior executives: [28]

THE 10 LARGEST NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS BY ORDER OF SIZE:	GENDER OF CEO	GENDER OF OTHER SENIOR LEADERS	
		WOMEN	MEN
HUDSON HEALTH PLAN (MVP HEALTHCARE)	F	8	4
LAWRENCE HOSPITAL & MEDICAL ASSOCIATES (NY PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL)	M	5	4
PHELPS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL SERVICES (NORTHWELL HEALTH)	M	10	28
NORTHERN WESTCHESTER HOSPITAL & FOUNDATION	M	9	5
HUDSON RIVER HEALTHCARE	F	7	4
JEWISH BOARD OF FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES	M	6	7
LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY	M	3	3
MANHATTANVILLE COLLEGE	M	4	7
MARCH OF DIMES FOUNDATION	F	2	2
MERCY COLLEGE	M	2	7
TOTALS	—	56	71

The largest nonprofits in Westchester are health care, colleges, and social service agencies.

Wage disparities in the nonprofit sector persist.

On the national level, women in nonprofit leadership positions still make less than men.

"The gap is most pronounced for women chief executives at groups with budgets of $2.5 million to $5 million, who take home 23 percent less than male peers."

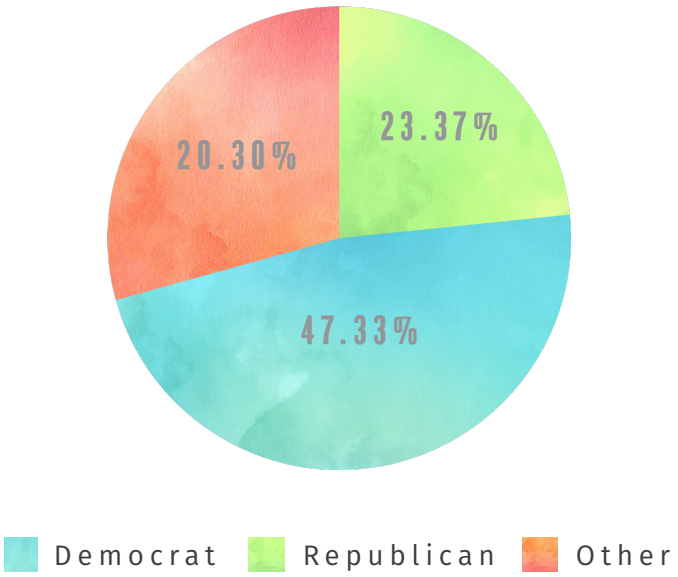
"Female CEO pay was closest to those of men at organizations with budgets of less than $250,000, earning 6 percent less." [29]

Nationally, the number of female nonprofit CEOs is decreasing. [30]

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: REGISTERED VOTERS — WESTCHESTER COUNTY

More people in Westchester are registered as Democrats than Republicans.

PARTY REGISTRATION BY GENDER

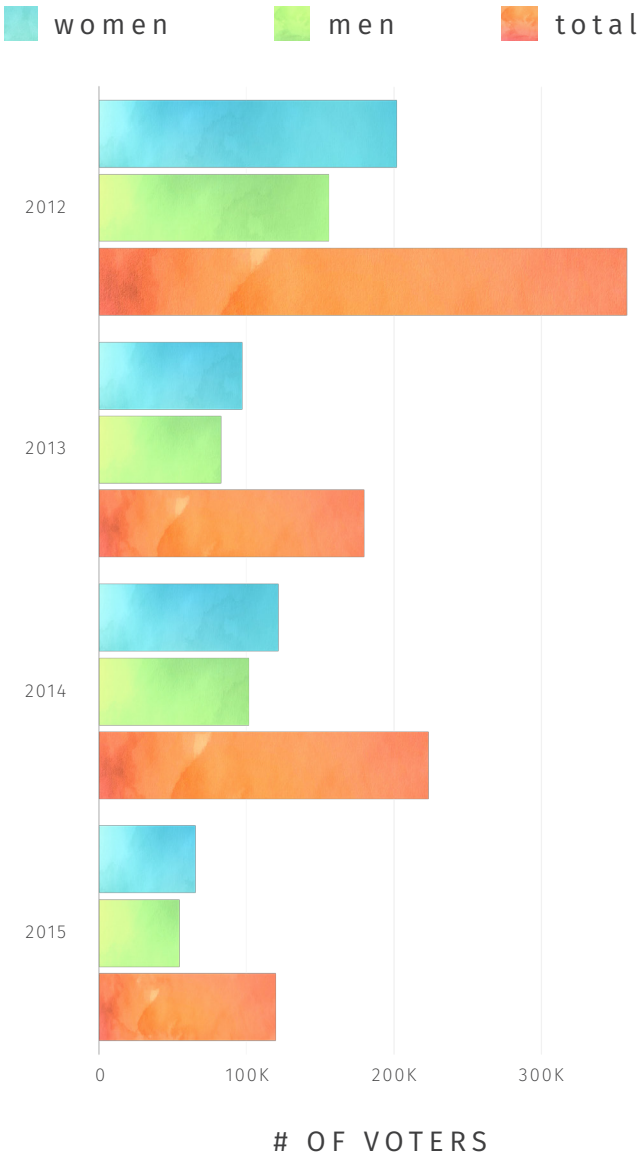


Women are more likely than men to be registered to vote. [31]

	% OF REGISTERED VOTERS	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
WOMEN	55.06%	50.8%
MEN	44.92%	49.2%

Women are also more likely to vote.

VOTING IN WESTCHESTER BY GENDER, 2012 - 2015 [32]



YOUR VOTE COUNTS

WHY SHOULD WOMEN VOTE?

"The 2016 Presidential Election is over. But our role as women is not. We are citizens of the USA; and if you are not registered to vote, REGISTER NOW. If you did not vote in the 2016 Presidential Election, VOTE IN THE NEXT ELECTION. If you voted, but did not have information about the candidates and the issues on the ballot, before the next election BECOME AN INFORMED VOTER.

Even though more women than men are registered and actually vote, the majority of political office holders at the state and federal levels are still male. The leaders you elect make the decisions that affect you — your job, health care, energy costs, security and more. Helping more women get elected will make women's issues a higher priority.

Voting is the most powerful way to make your voice heard."

— Marianna Stout,
League of Women Voters
of Westchester

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP BY WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

1. Women should seek out sponsors at corporations and negotiate for higher pay and promotions.
2. Public companies and companies seeking government contracts should be required to disclose the proportion of women in senior management at their companies.
3. The Westchester Business Council and the Westchester County Association should begin to keep track of the proportion of women on boards and in senior management of their members.
4. Women should be encouraged to run for elected office and provided with opportunities to learn how to become elected officials.

WOMEN & HEALTH: OVERVIEW

There are striking disparities between racial and ethnic groups in women's health indicators. White women have the lowest percentage of premature deaths and the highest rate of adequate prenatal care. Asian women have the highest percentage of early prenatal care and the lowest rate of teen pregnancies. Breast cancer mortality is lowest among Asian women, and late stage breast cancer incidence is lowest among Hispanics. The birth rate has declined in Westchester over the last decade.

Women live longer than men. Whites live longer than Blacks or Hispanics. Women are more likely to die of circulatory (heart) diseases than men, and men are more likely to die of respiratory diseases than women.

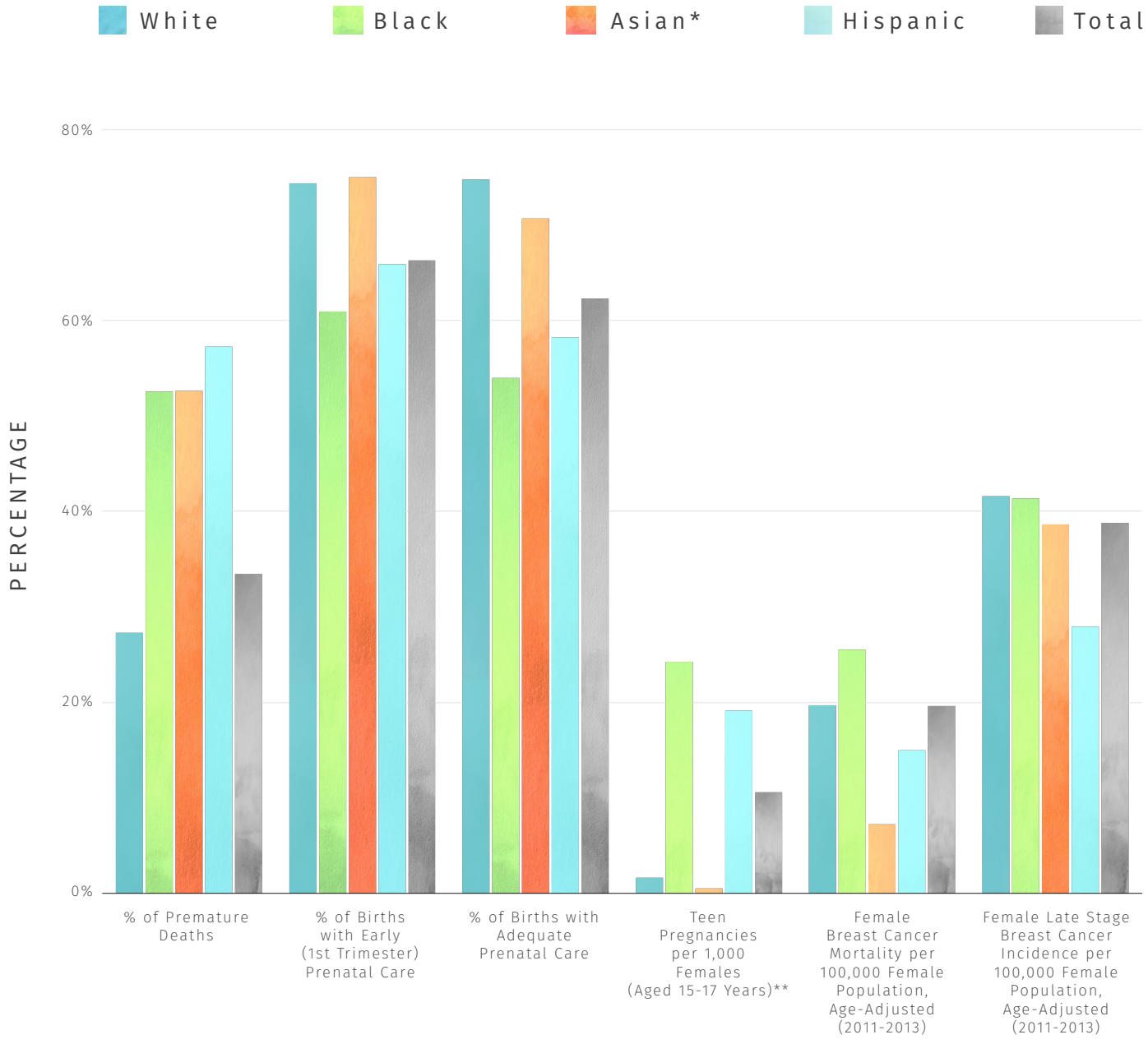
The pregnancy rate of teenagers aged 18-19 has dropped dramatically over the last 9 years. Abortion rates have also declined, although there has been a slight increase recently in both teenage pregnancy (aged 18-19) and abortion.

Health insurance coverage has increased slightly over the last three years, due in all likelihood to the Affordable Care Act.

Depression is by far the most common clinical mental health diagnosis among women.

The number of new cases of Chlamydia continues to rise. Chlamydia can make it difficult or even impossible for a woman to become pregnant.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY FEMALE HEALTH INDICATORS BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2012-2014[33]



* Includes Pacific Islanders.

** Within Asian population: Fewer than 10 events in the numerator, therefore the rate or percentage is unstable.

PRENATAL CARE, BIRTHWEIGHT & DEATH IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

The number of births in Westchester County has declined an average of **2.2%** per year over the past ten years (from 2000-2010).

Of the 11,097 infants born in Westchester County in 2010, **8.6%** were born with low birthweight. The rate of low birthweight was **8.2%** among Whites, **12.6%** among Blacks and **7.6%** among Hispanics.

10.2% of the infants born were born prematurely in 2010.

About **27%** of the infants in 2010 were born to mothers who did not seek or who delayed prenatal care until the second or third trimester. The percent of mothers who delayed or did not seek prenatal care was higher among teenage mothers, Black and Hispanic women, and among women with less than a high school education.

The overall infant mortality rate was **4.1** deaths per 1000 live births in 2010; **4.0** for whites and **9.2** for blacks. [34]

CAUSES OF DEATH BY SEX, RACE & ETHNICITY

In 2010 the average age at death of females was 80.7, compared to 73.9 for males.

The 2010 death rate was 859.4 per 100,000 for Whites, 602.4 for Blacks and 193.7 for Hispanics. This reflects different age distributions among the ethnic subpopulations.

The average age at death was 79.2 for Whites, 69.4 for Blacks and 62.7 for Hispanics in 2010.

Almost 40% (36.6%) of all deaths were due to diseases of the circulatory system. Over 25% were due to neoplasms (27.0%), and almost 10% were due to diseases of the respiratory system (9.2%).

Diseases of the circulatory system, neoplasms and diseases of the respiratory system were the leading causes of death for both men and women.

Women are more likely than men to die of diseases of the circulatory system (38.2% vs. 34.9%).

Men are more likely than women to die of diseases of the respiratory system (28.7%vs. 25.4%).

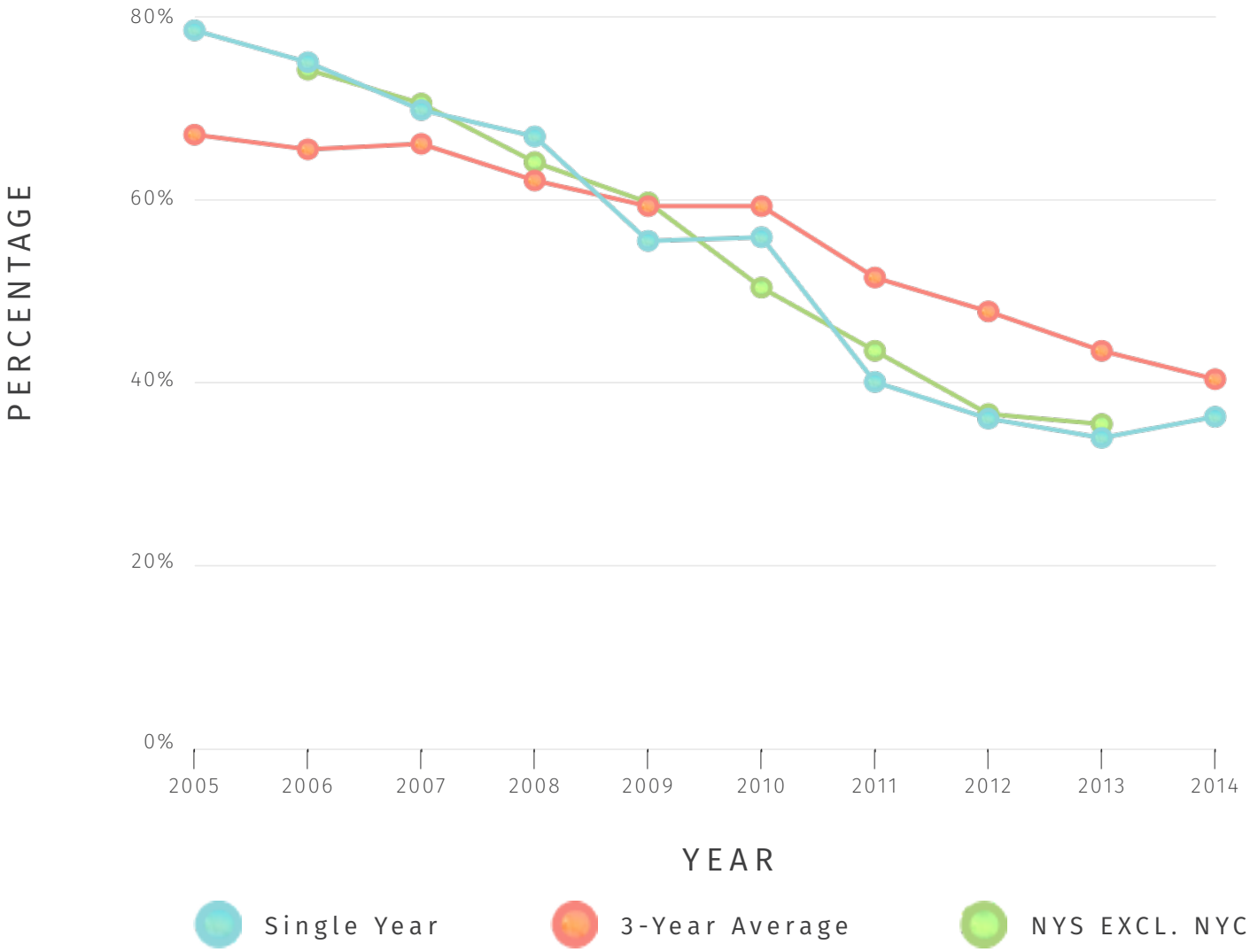
Other causes of death for women included 4.7% from diseases of the nervous system (including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease), and 3.4% from certain infectious and parasitic diseases.

Other causes of death for men included 6.1% from external causes of morbidity and mortality (including accidents, homicide and suicide) and 4.1% from certain infectious and parasitic diseases.

Diseases of the circulatory system and neoplasms were the leading causes of death across all racial and ethnic groups. [35]

TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN WESTCHESTER

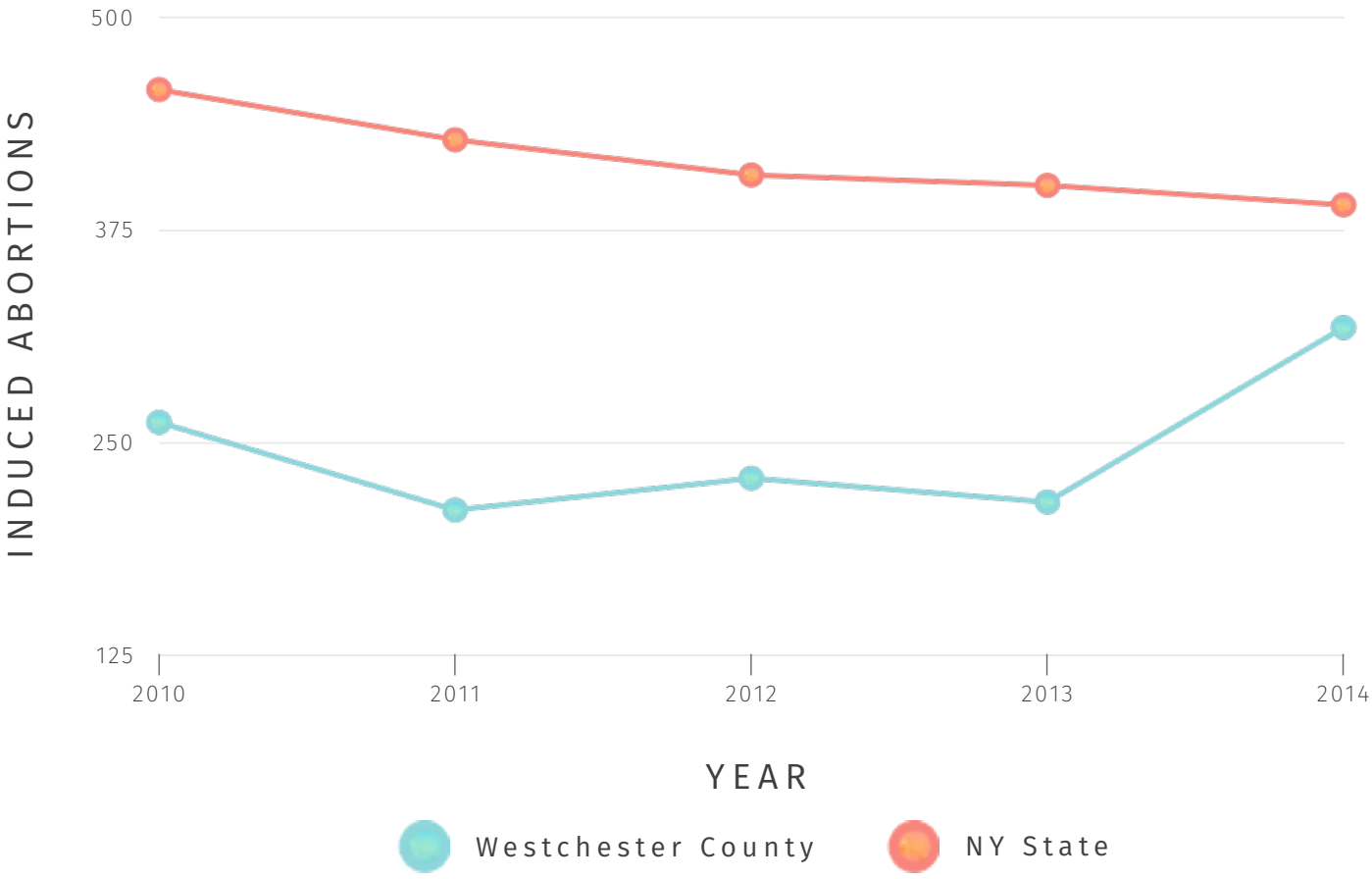
WESTCHESTER COUNTY TEEN PREGNANCY RATE PER 1,000 FEMALES AGED 18-19 YEARS[36]



Between 2005 and 2014 the teenage pregnancy rate in Westchester County dropped dramatically, from **78.5** per 1000 females aged 18-19 years to **36.3**. However, there has been a slight upturn between 2013 and 2014, from **34.0** to **36.3**.

Rates vary substantially by race and ethnicity. See *teenage pregnancy rates by race and ethnicity* in this report.

ABORTION RATIOS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY



ABORTION RATIO*	WESTCHESTER COUNTY	NEW YORK STATE
2014	317.9	392.0
2013	215.3	401.5
2012	229.3	407.6
2011	210.6	428.3
2010	262.2	457.8

*Induced abortions per 1,000 live births

For the state as a whole, abortion rates have dropped over the five year period from 2010 to 2014. However, they increased in Westchester County in 2014, after dropping in the previous years. This statistic needs to be watched to determine its significance.[37]

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Health insurance coverage in Westchester has improved slightly over the last three years.

In 2014, **10.5%** of the population in Westchester had no health insurance coverage. In 2013, that figure was **11.0%**. In 2012, it was **11.1%**. [38]

For the period of 2009-2013: **11.0%** of the population in Westchester had no health insurance coverage. This compares favorably to the United States as a whole: **14.9%**. And to New York State: **11.1%**.

Women in Westchester are more likely to have health insurance than men.

Blacks in Westchester are less likely to have health insurance than Whites, and Hispanic/Latinos are least likely to have coverage.

For the period of 2009-2013: **10.4%** of Blacks had no coverage. **7.5%** of Whites had no coverage. **28.2%** of Hispanics/Latinos had no health insurance. [39]

The youngest and the oldest of Westchester County residents are most likely to have health insurance.

For the period of 2009-2013: Of those under 18 years of age, **3.3%** have no health insurance. Of those aged 18-34, **24.2%** have no health insurance. Of those aged 35-64, **12.4%** have no health insurance. Of those aged 65+, **1.2%** have no health insurance. [40]

THE MENTAL HEALTH STATUS OF WOMEN

The following report was provided by the Mental Health Association (MHA) of Westchester.

The Mental Health Association of Westchester (MHA) provides a wide array of services to meet the mental health needs of the Westchester community, these services include: OMH licensed clinics, care management, housing, peer support and employment services. For those served in our mental health clinics, by far the most common clinical diagnosis among the women we serve is depression, it is more than double the second and third most common diagnoses, respectively: bipolar disorder and PTSD, followed closely by psychotic disorder and anxiety disorder.

CLINICAL ISSUES/CHALLENGES

Clinically, these issues are more common with female clients:

- Domestic violence.
- Trauma.
- Co-occurring substance abuse (often as a way of self-medicating, dealing with trauma).
- Family reunification—Many immigrant clients have families that have been or are separated because of migration. This is a challenge both while the families are apart and also when the families are reunited after being separated, often for many years.
- Mothers'/care takers' estrangement from their children and families because of their mental illness, substance abuse, incarceration, etc.
- Feelings of guilt and remorse by mothers who were unable to adequately care for their children because of their illness.

OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES

Many of the obstacles that women face when accessing mental health services are related to their role as the primary care giver in families. Examples of this include:

- Economic challenges (unemployment, underemployment, low paying jobs, etc.).
- The challenge of finding childcare so they can attend appointments.
- Transportation costs associated with attending appointments.
- Difficulty parenting/accessing resources for children with special needs.
- Many parents in general, have limited understanding of their children's diagnoses and how to best support their children. Often getting stuck in a cycle of guilt, blame and frustration. This challenge is exacerbated when there are linguistic and cultural differences.
- Intergenerational care taking. Many grandmothers are legal guardians of their grandchildren, while at the same time getting older themselves with limited resources. Lack of knowledge as to what resources and services are available to them.
- Stigma associated with seeking treatment.
- For those in custody battles, being in treatment and/or having a mental health diagnosis can have a negative impact when seeking custody.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE THE MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Provide greater financial support to reduce some of the barriers to treatment for low- and middle-income women, e.g. transportation and child care costs.
2. Provide opportunities for training in trauma-informed care with the understanding that the vast majority of clients in general, but women in particular, have experienced trauma (sexual assault and abuse, domestic violence, incarceration, foster care, hospitalization, separation from their families, etc.).
3. Provide cultural competency training to better understand the impact of migration, language acquisition, norms and expectations.
4. Enhance mental health treatment for the most at-risk children with mobile visits so that parents, kids and families can be served in locations that are more comfortable and accessible to them.
5. Educate and train the general community about the facts and data on mental illness in order to reduce the stigma of mental health treatment with programs such as Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid.
6. Provide greater training on the interrelationship between physical and behavioral health, including substance use.
7. Recognize the impact of trauma on women by approaching care from the point of view of "what happened to you" vs. "what's wrong with you."
8. Provide great workforce training and education programs specifically focused on the needs of women.
9. Provide greater access to parenting supports.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

According to a report from Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic (PPHP), the following are concerns and key issues in the area of sexual and reproductive health:

- Lack of a Clinic Access Bill to protect women from harassment while obtaining health care services.
- The number of new cases of Chlamydia continues to rise in Westchester. Chlamydia can make it difficult or even impossible for a woman to become pregnant.
- Patients who fall into the 100% and below Federal Poverty Limit are declining, yet the need exists.

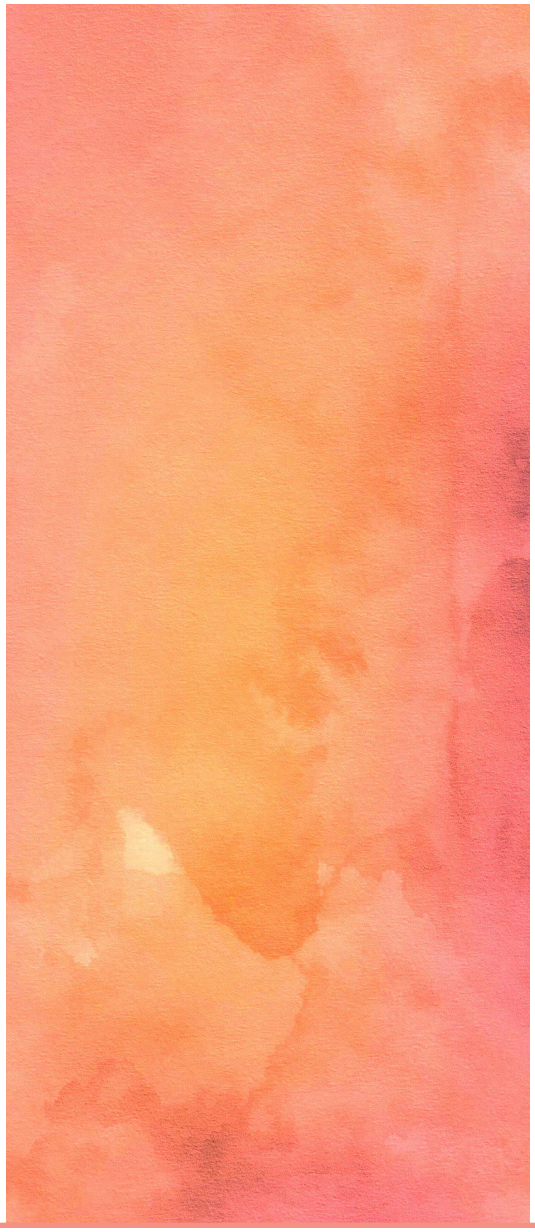
PPHP's recent accomplishments:

- Provided 135 age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health programs to 2,001 youth in 2015. These programs were offered in high schools, middle schools, and at community-based organizations in Westchester County.
- Monthly Teen Nights provided a safe space for dozens of teens to gather, learn, and access health care services in Yonkers and White Plains. They had the opportunity to tour the health centers and schedule appointments for future dates.

"Planned Parenthood has been a necessity in my community, not only for myself but for many others that I know, including family and friends. They provide a quick and private experience and you always feel like you are getting the best care in a timely manner. Without Planned Parenthood people will have unnecessary amount of illness/diseases and uncertainty. We need more places like Planned Parenthood."

— Patient at Mount Vernon, NY

"I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON IMMEDIATE CARE AND BE CONFIDENT THAT I'LL HAVE SAME DAY TREATMENT..."



"I've been a patient at Planned Parenthood since I was 17 and now I'm 33 with two children. I love their services. I can always count on immediate care and be confident that I'll have same day treatment, as opposed to having a doctor who makes me wait for an appointment then after the appointment having to wait 2-3 weeks for results. I couldn't imagine going through that ever again. Thank God for Planned Parenthood."

— Patient at Yonkers, NY

"When I was told to get tested by a past partner for an STD, I knew that Planned Parenthood would be able to provide me with the same day service. Thank you for being there for me in my moment of panic and uncertainty."

— Patient at White Plains, NY

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Pass a Clinic Access Bill to protect women receiving health care services.
2. Secure County funding to provide sexual and reproductive health in schools to further reduce teen pregnancies and transmission of STIs
3. Provide greater awareness for the communities of need that Family Planning services are available to them. We have seen a decline in patients in the 100% and below Federal Poverty Line.
4. Sustain the reduced rates of teen pregnancy by building on the success of programs such as the joint Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention program being carried out by Planned Parenthood, the YWCA, the JBFCS and the White Plains Youth Bureau which focuses on expanding access to knowledge about birth control while building self-esteem among youth.

THE SOCIAL & LEGAL WELL BEING OF WOMEN: *OVERVIEW*

Domestic violence is a major public health issue for women in Westchester County and the world. Both women and men are victims of domestic violence, and other family members—including children—are victims too. One of the biggest obstacles to women leaving is the lack of decent and affordable housing for women and their families.

Recent efforts in New York State to combat sexual violence against college age victims include the recent passage of legislation "Enough is Enough," bringing resources to sexual assault victim advocates around the State and the creation of the NYS Police Campus Sexual Assault Crime Victims Unit.

Female incarceration rates have declined steadily since their peak in 1991.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS: WESTCHESTER COUNTY

In Westchester County, the Integrated Domestic Violence Court ("IVDC") issued 821 criminal and 160 civil orders of protection in 2015; the Westchester Family Courts issued 4,357 orders of protection. In 2014, there were 12,461 Domestic Incident Reports taken by the County's 43 police departments, with a 9% increase over 2012. In 2015, there were 2,518 cases taken in by the Domestic Violence Bureau of the District Attorney's Office. [41]

> "The demand for domestic violence services far exceeds the resources that are available. Since the Hope's Door domestic violence shelter opened in 1997, we have sheltered 2,031 persons and turned away 13,611 victims. In effect, Hope's Door turns away 7 victims for every 1 victim we can shelter due to lack of room."
>
> — CarlLa Horton, Executive Director, Hope's Door

"THE DEMAND FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES FAR EXCEEDS THE RESOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE."

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFFECTS EVERY COMMUNITY

DOMESTIC INCIDENT REPORTS 2012 VS. 2014

WESTCHESTER COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT RECORDS

*Westchester County PD numbers include Town of Ossining for 2014

*Cortlandt, Hawthorne and Somers State Police assist other areas

Data compiled by Diane Murphy, Westchester County Office for Women, March 2015

DEPARTMENT	POPULATION 2010	# SWORN OFFICERS	DIRs - 2012	DIRs - 2014	CHANGE IN DIRs	% CHANGE IN DIRs
Ardsley	4,452	19	9	36	27	300%
Bedford	17,335	39	130	113	-17	-13%
Briarcliff Manor	7,867	19	15	13	-2	-13%
Bronxville	6,323	21	19	18	-1	-5%
Buchanan	2,230	6	32	26	-6	-19%
Cortlandt State Police	N/A	30	311	344	33	11%
Croton-on-Hudson	8,070	21	54	54	0	0%
Dobbs Ferry	10,875	25	107	76	-31	-29%
Eastchester	19,554	49	93	107	14	15%
Elmsford	4,664	19	44	71	27	61%
Greenburgh	42,863	115	578	687	109	19%
Harrison	27,472	66	279	255	-24	-9%
Hastings-on-Hudson	7,849	21	94	65	-29	-31%
Hawthorne State Police	N/A	15	14	2	-12	-86%
Irvington	6,420	22	36	42	6	17%
Larchmont	5,864	25	22	30	8	36%
Lewisboro	12,411	11	27	27	0	0%
Mamaroneck Town	11,977	38	106	74	-32	-30%
Mamaroneck Village	18,929	51	250	205	-45	-18%
Mount Kisco	10,877	26	132	122	-10	-8%
Mount Pleasant	26,176	41	120	94	-26	-22%
Mount Vernon	67,292	198	2455	2741	286	12%
New Castle	17,569	37	85	75	-10	-12%
New Rochelle	77,062	150	1093	1442	349	32%
North Castle	11,841	31	42	54	12	29%
North Salem	5,104	14	4	5	1	25%
Ossining Village	25,060	61	164	126	-38	-23%
Peekskill	23,583	55	572	592	20	3%
Pelham	6,910	25	56	54	-2	-4%
Pelham Manor	5,486	27	25	30	5	20%
Pleasantville	7,019	22	27	32	5	19%
Port Chester	28,967	59	230	214	-16	-7%
Pound Ridge	5,104	21	99	92	-7	-7%
Rye	15,720	36	22	30	8	36%
Rye Brook	9,347	26	61	77	16	26%
Scarsdale	17,166	45	30	41	11	37%
Sleepy Hollow	9,870	24	153	136	-17	-11%
Somers State Police	N/A	30	138	180	42	30%
Somers Town	20,434	16	9	23	14	156%
SUNY Police Purchase	N/A	19	N/A	21	N/A	N/A
Tarrytown	11,277	33	119	126	7	6%
Tuckahoe	6,486	23	85	91	6	7%
Westchester County PD	N/A	267	139	99	-40	-29%
White Plains	56,853	190	1080	1059	-21	-2%
Yonkers	195,976	614	1908	2390	482	25%
Yorktown	36,081	55	313	270	-43	-14%
TOTAL COUNTY	912,415	2,757	11,381	12,461	1,080	9%

A STATEMENT FROM HOPE'S DOOR

There are other issues as well, as the following report by CarlLa Horton indicates:

Domestic violence, a pattern of coercive behavior used by one person in an intimate relationship to dominate or control his or her partner, most often involves physical, emotional, sexual, and/or financial abuse. The problem is a pervasive one in our society, and no one is immune.

Survivors of domestic violence in Westchester County suffer from abuse in both lethal and non-lethal ways, leaving wounds that can be seen and not seen. These victims, both adults and children, live in fear and confront danger, both physical and emotional, every single day of their lives. They feel hopeless and alone. They believe that no one is there to listen, to believe or to help them.

They have been coerced, falsely, into believing that the abuse is their fault and that if only they did something different that the abuse would stop. They live with a deep sense of guilt, misplaced shame and a distorted reality, that repels them from seeking the very help they so desperately need. These victims all too often do not reveal the abuse, report offenses, seek medical care, pursue orders of protection, leave their abusers, seek legal remedies or access the trauma-informed services that would foster safety, independence and healing from the trauma of abuse. The barriers between victims and safety are enormous. Fear is paramount. Victims lack knowledge about their rights and options and have become convinced that they don't have what it takes to make it on their own.

But, they don't have to make it on their own. There are agencies with expert staff and volunteers poised to help.

These include:

- Hope's Door
- My Sisters' Place
- Victims Assistance Services/WestCOP
- Pace Women's Justice Center
- Westchester County Office for Women
- Westchester Family Justice Center
- Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

"HOPE'S DOOR HAS GIVEN ME THE COURAGE AND HOPE I NEVER HAD BEFORE AND HAS HELPED ME BECOME THE WOMAN I WAS MEANT TO BE — STRONG, COURAGEOUS, AND MOST OF ALL FREE."

— Elizabeth, Domestic Violence survivor

HOPE'S DOOR: LOCAL DATA & QUOTES FROM CLIENTS

Domestic violence crosses all socio-economic barriers. In one year, Hope's Door served homeless survivors with no discernible income and one survivor with an adjusted gross income of more than $8 million.

Miranda, an MBA career professional, came to us with a black eye and a broken spirit. Here is what she had to say about Hope's Door:

"When I left court, I had more than my order of protection. I went home with my dignity and my confidence restored. Hope's Door had built a protective fence around me and my family. It was the first time in months that I felt I could breathe."

A Teen Survivor told us the following:

"Even after my ex-boyfriend strangled me, I didn't tell anyone. I didn't know where to turn. I felt stuck. Then I heard about Hope's Door. I not only learned how to protect myself but now I can help others facing the same problem."

— 16-year-old Kristy, who revealed her abuse after a workshop at her high school

DANGER ASSESSMENT

Hope's Door uses the evidence-based Danger Assessment developed at Johns Hopkins University to help identify the weighted risk factors associated with Domestic Violence homicide and attempted homicide.

The number of survivors with higher levels of danger has increased dramatically, more than doubling between 2015 and 2016.

Here is a report on the isolated risk factors as self-reported by adult survivors served at Hope's Door between 2012 and 2016.

QUESTION #	RISK FACTOR	% YES	WEIGHTED VALUE
1	Has the physical violence increased in severity or frequency over the past year?	53%	1
2	Does he own a gun?	18%	5
3	Have you left him after living together during the past year?	48%	4
4	Is he unemployed?	25%	4
5	Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a lethal weapon?	22%	3
6	Does he threaten to kill you?	42%	3
7	Has he avoided being arrested for domestic violence?	46%	3
8	Do you have a child that is not his?	29%	2
9	Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?	44%	2
10	Does he ever try to choke or strangle you?	45%	1
11	Does he use illegal drugs?	28%	1
12	Is he an alcoholic or problem drinker?	43%	1
13	Does he control most or all of your daily activities?	68%	1
14	Is he violently and constantly jealous of you?	61%	1
15	Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant?	23%	1
16	Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?	33%	1
17	Does he threaten to harm your children?	16%	1
18	Do you believe he is capable of killing you?	56%	1
19	Does he follow or spy on you, leave threatening notes or messages on answering machine, destroy your property, or call you when you don't want him to?	65%	1

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: NATIONAL DATA

- Nearly **1 in 4** women in the U. S. reports violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life. [42]
- Women are **84%** of spousal abuse victims and **86%** of victims abused by other intimate partners. [43]
- Women experience **two million injuries** from intimate partner violence **each** year. [44]
- On average more than **3 women a day** are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States. [45]
- Of 57 domestic homicides occurring in New York State between 1990 and 1997, **75%** of the victims had ended the relationship or stated an intention to end it at the time of their death. [46]
- The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds **$5.8 billion** each year, $4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health services. [47]

INCARCERATION OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

Incarceration of women reached an all-time high in Westchester County at **58** per 100,000 in 1991. By 2001 it had gone down to **36.3**. It shot back up again to **54.6** in 2006 and came down to **31.4** in 2013.

For men it peaked at **496.3** in 2007 and went down to **340.4** in 2013. But male incarceration rates skyrocketed between 1970 and 2007 and have stayed high until they began coming down after 2007; whereas female rates have declined steadily since their peak in 1991, except for a brief spike in 2006. [48]

These data are consistent with the declining job opportunities for working-class men over the same period that resulted in greater incarceration rates. Conversely, better job opportunities and financial independence for women resulted in lower incarceration rates.

IMPRISONMENT & FAMILIES IN NEW YORK STATE

In 2009:

- Almost 73% of New York's incarcerated women were parents, compared to 58% of men.
- More than 10,000 children had a mother in a jail or prison in New York State.
- More than 64% of mothers in state prison lived with their children before prison, compared to over 46% of men.
- Over 77% of mothers in state prison were the primary caretakers of their children before arrest, compared with more than 26% of men.
- African-American children are 7.5 times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children. Latino children are 2.5 times more likely than White children to have an incarcerated parent. [49]

For the most recent national date (2015), see: *http://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Incarcerated-Women-and-Girls.pdf*

See also: *http://www.osborneny.org/images/uploads/printMedia/Initiative%20CIP%20Stats_Fact%20Sheet.pdf*

Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women is **one of the few prisons in the country** that allows babies to live with convicted mothers who were pregnant when they were sent to prison. [50]

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL AND LEGAL WELL BEING OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Establish a Westchester County Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) high-risk team comprised of domestic violence advocates, law enforcement, representatives from the judiciary, healthcare and criminal justice system, among others to be identified, to develop and implement coordinated strategies to foster safety for survivors and accountability of offenders.
2. Expand opportunities for prevention with youth in middle school and high school.
3. Expand opportunities for affordable permanent housing.
4. Expand opportunities for transitional housing.
5. Assure availability of Spanish-speaking interpreters at the courthouse.
6. Provide funding from Enough is Enough State funding to local advocacy groups to support college-age victims of sexual assault and IPV.

HOUSING: OVERVIEW

For renter households in particular in Westchester County, housing has gotten progressively less affordable. Wages have not kept pace with the cost of housing. Federal poverty guidelines fail to capture the need. Many Westchester families and individuals are "locked out" of even so-called "affordable housing." Housing affordability is a problem not only in Westchester but in New York State and throughout the country.

According to the most recently available data, the median home value in Westchester County is $551,800. Westchester County home values have gone up **2.7%** over the past year and Zillow predicts they will rise **2.0%** within the next year. The median list price per square foot in Westchester County is **$286**, which is higher than the New York Metro average of $246. The median price of homes currently listed in Westchester County is **$524,900**. The median rent price in Westchester County is **$3,099**, which is higher than the New York Metro median of **$2,750**. [51]

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

The U.S. Department of Housing (HUD) defines affordable housing as that which costs less than 30% of household income.

By that standard, half or more of Westchester County's renters live in housing that they cannot afford.

In 2014, **46.2%** of renter households paid more than 35% of their income in rent.

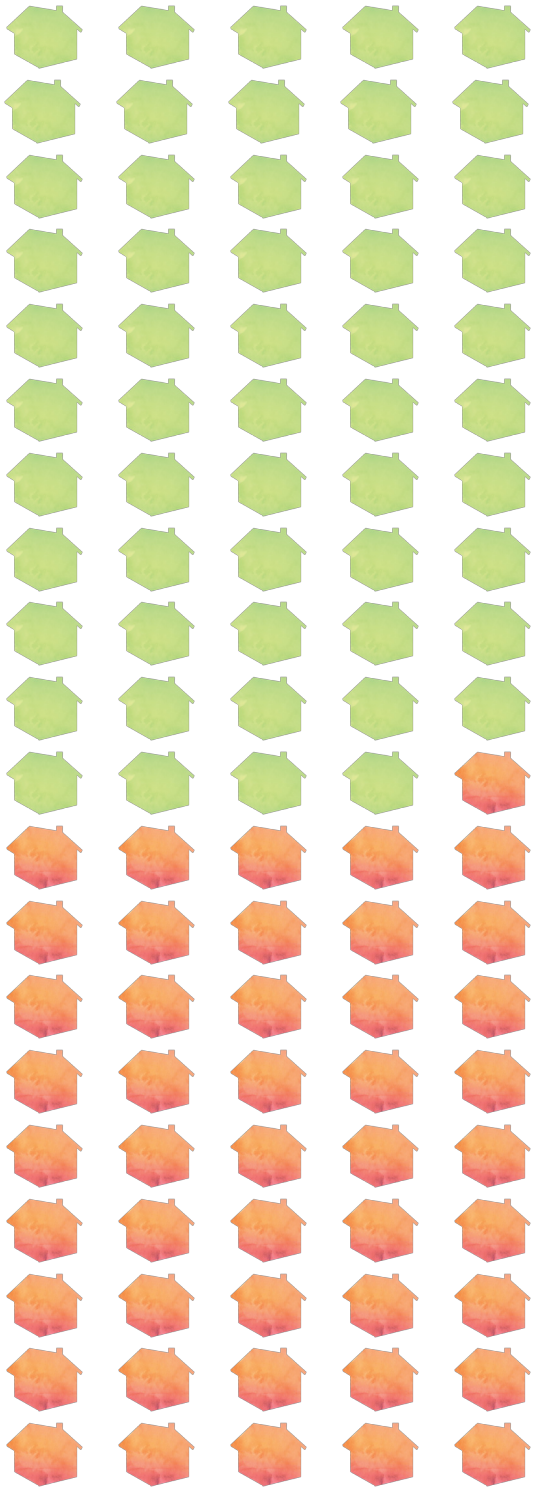
For renters, the housing cost burden has gotten worse over the last five years.

In 2010, **42.8%** of renter households paid more than **35%** of their household income for rent.

Renters also pay a higher share of their income for housing than owners — including owners who carry a mortgage.

In 2010, 34.8% of owner households with a mortgage paid more than 35% of their household income in housing costs. In 2014, that percentage went down to 34.3%.

For households without a mortgage, in 2009 24.3% of owner households paid more than 35% of their household income in housing costs. In 2014, that percentage went up to 25.0%. [52]



= RENTERS PAYING < 35% OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME ON RENT, 2014

= RENTERS PAYING > 35% OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME ON RENT, 2014

FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES FAIL TO CAPTURE THE NEED

In Westchester County, it is estimated that families need to make **2.6** times the federal poverty level, or **$63,640** to afford a 2-bedroom apartment. More than one-quarter (27%) of Westchester's children live in low-income families which make less than $48,500 (200% of the federal poverty level). [53]

Many Westchester households are locked out of "affordable housing."

Despite a Fair and Affordable Housing settlement, due to their low incomes, many Westchester households are priced out of even so-called "affordable housing."

More than **22%** of all Westchester households get by on less than **$35,000** per year. [54]

> "We're going to reach the 750 [units of fair housing]. But it's going to be a drop in the bucket compared to the need."
>
> — Rose Noonan, Executive Director, Housing Action Council [55]

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN NEW YORK STATE

Housing affordability is a problem not only in Westchester, but also throughout New York State and throughout the country.

For a recent report on housing affordability in New York State, see *https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/housing/affordable_housing_ny_2014.pdf*

A few key facts:

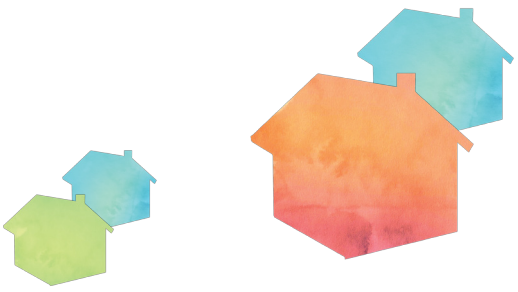
- "Statewide, the estimated percentage of rental households with rents above the affordability level increased from 40.5 percent in 2000 to 50.6 percent in 2012."
- "In 2012, more than one in four rental households paid gross rents that consumed at least half their household income — a level the Census Bureau describes as ***'severely housing cost burdened.'***"
- "Among homeowners, the percentage of New York households with monthly owner costs above the affordability level increased from 26.4 percent in 2000 to 33.9 percent in 2012.
- "Median household income for homeowners declined by 1.6 percent over the period, while median household income for renters declined more sharply, by 7.1 percent in real terms. Median housing costs increased over this period for both rental households (by 18.6 percent) and owner households (by 9.9 percent) in inflation-adjusted terms.

ALICE Report Shows Poor Housing Affordability in Westchester.

The recent ALICE report on New York State by the United Way rates Westchester and other NY counties on Economic Viability. Their Economic Viability Dashboard evaluates community conditions in three areas, on a scale of 1 to 100 and allows comparisons to other locations. Westchester rates as Poor in Housing Affordability (a score of 18), Fair in Job Opportunities (54) and Fair in Community Resources (51). [56]

Exclusionary zoning persists.

The ability of women of color to obtain adequate housing for themselves and their families is severely constrained not only by the dramatic shortage of affordable housing units but also because of the persistence of exclusionary zoning in the county. [57]



ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAIR AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. Westchester County should immediately conduct a new Housing Needs Assessment; the last assessment was done in 2004.
2. Westchester County should reapply for federal funding for fair and affordable housing to access all possible federal resources for towns and cities in our county to develop this needed housing. Several years ago, Westchester County opted out of CBDG funding. Now, individual Westchester towns have to compete with the rest of New York for State funding.
3. The County should encourage mobility counseling by funding non-profits to educate those who can access Section 8 or other forms of affordable housing about moving out of low-income neighborhoods into communities of opportunity.

FAMILY CARE: OVERVIEW

Families with children — particularly families headed by single women — have suffered in the economic downturn. A growing number of Westchester families find child care largely unaffordable. Unaffordable child care negatively impacts women's work lives. The lack of affordable child care is a problem not only in Westchester but across the State and the nation. However, New York is one of the most expensive states for child care, and Westchester is one of the most expensive counties in New York State.

Elder care also presents a looming crisis for working women in Westchester, who are "sandwiched" between caring for children and caring for aging parents.

Kinship families are among Westchester's most vulnerable populations who continue to experience the adverse effects of the recent economic crisis and the decreased state, county and local funding of social service programs.

THE STATUS OF CHILDREN IN WESTCHESTER

The economic situation has gotten worse for children in Westchester over the last five years.

In 2009, **3.1%** of married-couple families with children under the age of 18 lived below the poverty level.

In 2009, **24.9%** of families headed by females, no husband present, were below the poverty level. [58]

Children who live in single-parent households in Westchester have much lower household incomes than in those headed by married couples.

The majority of children in Westchester County live in a household headed by a married couple. Their household median income is **$153,000**.

However, **20%** of children in Westchester County live in a household headed by a single mother. Their household median income is **$37,000**.

And **6%** of children in WC live in a household headed by a single father. Their household median income is **$46,000**. [59]

Children in families headed by women in Westchester are more likely to live in poverty.

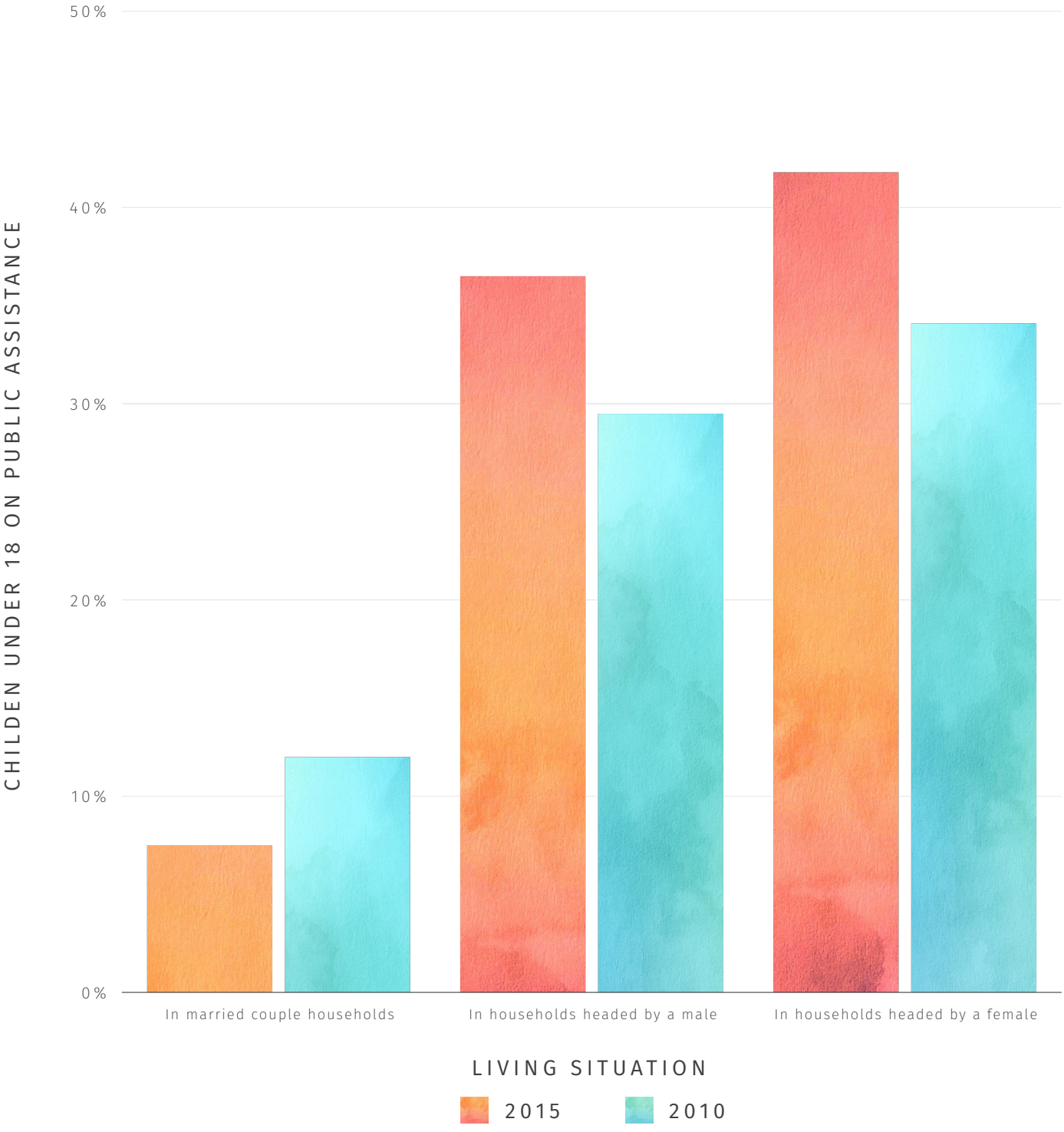
In 2014 4.3% of married-couple families with children under the age of 18 lived below the poverty level.

28.1% of families with children under the age of 18, headed by females , no husband present, were below the poverty level in 2014. [60]

Children in single-parent households in Westchester are more likely to utilize public assistance, and here too the situation has worsened (*seen in the graph on the following page*). [61]

Reliance on public assistance has dropped for married couple families, whereas it has increased for both female-headed and male-headed single parent households.

CHILDREN ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE



UNAFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

The importance of safe, reliable child care to working women cannot be overstated. In their 2016 parent child care survey, the Child Care Council of Westchester found that half the respondents agree that child care issues impact their work: 55% call in sick, 5% leave work early, 41% arrive late to work, 35% feel distracted, 20% reduce work hours and 13% either quit or lose their jobs.

The survey results also revealed that a growing number of Westchester parents find child care largely unaffordable. In fact, nearly half of the respondents indicated that they had trouble paying for child care in the last 6 months. To deal with these high child care costs, nearly half of the parents borrowed money from their families, a third moved their children from regulated to informal child care and over a quarter reduced their working hours.

CHILD CARE UNAFFORDABILITY IS A NATIONAL ISSUE. WESTCHESTER WOMEN FACE PARTICULARLY DAUNTING CHILD CARE COSTS.

Child care unaffordability is a national issue. Westchester women face particularly daunting child care costs. New York is one of the most expensive states in the U.S. for child care and Westchester is one of the most expensive counties in New York. In 2015 the mean cost of Westchester center-based care for infants was just under $20,000; toddler care about $17,600; preschool care about $15,300 and school age care just over $10,000. An often overlooked factor is that parents must pay for child care during a time in their work lives when their earnings are less than they will be later on.

Currently, with over 34,000 regulated child care and after school “slots” in Westchester, parents

can usually find what they are looking for. This is true despite the fact that using a national formula, the estimated need for full-time regulated child care in Westchester should be 85,000 slots or more than double the current inventory. Many child care programs are under-enrolled. In the opinion of the Child Care Council, child care enrollment is significantly depressed by the high cost of care and the limited financial assistance available to working families.

The United States provides little support for child care compared to many other industrialized countries. While middle income parents can access various tax credits and set up dependent care assistance plans, they will still struggle to pay Westchester child care prices. Lower income families up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level may be eligible for the government funded child care subsidy program administered by the Westchester Department of Social Services (DSS). In light of the high cost of Westchester living, DSS also offers subsidies for working families over 200% FPL, depending on family size. Many families receiving the subsidy pay a family share of 27% of gross income over 100% FPL, which can be a significant financial burden.

President Obama made early learning a priority in his administration but was unable to secure the increased child care investments he recommended. The number of families receiving the child care subsidy nationally is now at its lowest level in many years. New York State has substantially expanded its Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program but has not answered the call for the child care funding needed to fully implement new national requirements, which are overdue, or to increase participation. Westchester County's child care subsidy program is more generous than that of many other counties, but a lower family share would expand participation and reimbursement rates to child care and after school businesses need to be raised to help programs attract and retain qualified staff and meet ever-higher quality standards. For more information, see:
www.ChildCareWestchester.org.[62]

While the issues facing children growing up in Westchester County are too complex to be covered in this report, which is primarily intended to highlight the status of women, the Westchester Children's Association publishes an excellent annual report on the status of children in Westchester. See:
www.WCA4kids.org/publications.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO MAKE CHILD CARE AFFORDABLE FOR WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Substantially increase child care subsidy funding at the federal, state and county levels to bring the family share to no more than 10% of family income; allow full implementation of new federal health, safety and quality standards; and raise reimbursement rate increases.
2. Fully fund QUALITYstarsNY, the New York quality rating improvement system to promote continuous quality improvement among child care programs and provide parents with more and better consumer info.
3. Establish a NYS Office of Early Childhood to achieve better coordination of services for young children.
4. Increase the annual cap on Dependent Care Assistance Plans to better align with actual child care costs to assist middle-income families.

ELDER CARE

The burden of caring for aging family members falls predominantly on women.

The U.S. Census Bureau "reports that nationally the number of people age 65 and older will increase to 55 million by 2020, a 36 percent increase from 2010.

In Westchester, residents over 60 represent 20 percent of the total population or one in five people. They will represent 25 percent of the population - or one in four - by 2030. And in the entire Hudson Valley region, the number of people over 60 is already twice as large as the national average." [63]

KINSHIP CARE

Grandparents and relatives raising children – known as kinship caregivers – are important resources for New York State's vulnerable children. Given the evidence that children live with kin for similar reasons as to why they enter foster care (parental neglect and safety concerns) and given the special needs of these children (disabilities, trauma, loss) and their caregivers (old age, poor health, poverty), New York needs to recognize the needs of these families and evolve its system of kinship services into a comprehensive model program that serves kinship children and their families across the entire state, and that addresses the persisting barriers to their success.

Nationwide, 2.7 million grandparents are raising grandchildren, and about one-fifth of those have incomes that fall below the poverty line, according to census figures. Their ranks are increasing. The number of grandparents raising grandchildren is up 7 percent from 2009. [64]

In Westchester County there are 4,334 grandparents and 2,889 other relatives who are also raising children.[65] According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, there are 1,944 grandparents in Yonkers alone who have sole responsibility for raising their grandchildren, and 4,595 children under the age of 18 who live in households headed by relatives other than their own parents, including 2,855 children in households headed by a grandparent and 1,740 in households headed by another relative. Between 2000 and 2012 the number of grandparents in Yonkers responsible for their grandchildren without either parent present increased by 22%.

Kinship families are among Westchester's most vulnerable populations who continue to experience the adverse effects of the recent economic crisis and the decreased state, county and local funding of social service programs. According to the 2014 Recommendations from the New York State Kincare Coalition, 92% of Westchester's kinship families do not receive benefits to which they are entitled. Unfortunately, these families, most often headed by a female grandparent, do not get the support that foster care parents receive.

Across the country, kinship caregivers are more likely to be poor, single, older, less educated and unemployed than families in which at least one parent is present according to 2012 Annie E. Casey Foundation's report, "***Stepping Up for Kids: What Government and Communities Should Do to Support Kinship Families***." [66] As well, kinship families are disproportionately people of color. A separate 2011 study observed that kinship caregivers were "four times more likely than foster caregivers not to have graduated from high school and three times more likely to have an annual household income of less than $20,000." However, the kinship caregivers, the study indicated, were less than half as likely as foster caregivers to receive any type of financial support . . .[67]

In New York State the average annual cost of all foster care placements is $56,060 per child, aaccording to a study conducted by the New York State Kincare Coalition. By comparison, the total annual cost per child in informal kinship care is $6,490.[68] Maintaining a child in kinship programs costs the public far less than if the child were in foster care. Generations United, a nonprofit that advocates for kinship families, says taxpayers would see significant savings by keeping children out of foster care and placing them with relatives. But at the same time, the group says there is no

comprehensive framework to keep these kinship families stable. Crucial programs, such as legal services and support groups, "exist only in small pockets of the country."[70] In Westchester the Family Service Society of Yonkers has the most comprehensive program to assist these kinship families.

While kinship caregivers do not get the support offered to foster parents, studies have shown that children in kinship care often have better outcomes than those remaining in foster care[71] and that kinship care costs the public significantly less than foster care. The researchers, however, emphasized, that "increased caregiver support services are urgently needed to improve outcomes of children in kinship care."[71]

Many of the kinship caregivers are living on fixed incomes and managing chronic illnesses. About a quarter of grandparents raising grandchildren have a disability.[72] The grandparents and other relatives providing kinship care to our high-need children have many strengths. Unlike foster parents, the kinship caregivers usually already have strong and positive relationships with the youth before they assume responsibility for their care. Kinship caregivers typically make long-term commitments to care for children as long as needed – often until adulthood.

Affordable, adequate housing is a critical issue for kinship families in New York State. Forty three percent of the families in New York State are housing cost-burdened, meaning they spend 30 percent or more of their monthly income on housing (rent or mortgage plus utilities); 23 percent are severely cost-burdened, spending at least 50 percent of their monthly income on housing. Nearly 22 percent of kinship families live in overcrowded housing, meaning there are more people in the housing unit than there are rooms and 7 percent of the families live in severely overcrowded housing.[73]

To nurture and support grandparent and relative caregivers in their childrearing responsibilities, the following recommendations should be implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION IN SUPPORT OF KINSHIP CARE IN WESTCHESTER

1. **Stabilize and Increase Funding to Serve Kinship Families.** New York State funds 21 local kinship services providers covering 27 counties, administered by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), including the Kinship Support Program, sponsored by the Family Service Society of Yonkers, serving kinship families throughout Westchester County and a statewide Kinship Navigator. Funding should be increased to establish and maintain programs to assist kinship caregivers in all 62 counties in New York State. These programs can provide assistance, service referrals, caregiver and youth support groups, and parenting training for the families.
2. **Promote and expand kinship foster care placement. Kinship foster parents receive substantially more financial and supportive services for the care of the children.** After 6 months kinship foster parents can apply for the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) which provides financial support similar to the maintenance payments received while the child was in foster care without the supervision of the local department of social services.
3. **Create and preserve affordable housing options, particularly accommodations suitable for kinship families.** Develop new affordable, supportive housing for older caregivers raising children; preserve and expand units conducive for kinship families (e.g. units with a sufficient number of bedrooms), in Section 8 and municipal housing. In addition, ease housing eligibility restrictions so grandparents can stay in their current housing when appropriate.[74]

"HOW DOES IT FEEL WHEN I WAKE UP AND OPEN MY EYES EACH MORNING? I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO PLEASED AND HAPPY IN MY LIFE."

CARYL: THE FACES OF WOMEN OF WESTCHESTER

Last week, Caryl was among volunteers preparing sandwiches at the church for "Midnight Run," a program where churches bring food and fellowship to homeless men and women living on the streets of New York. A woman of strength and resilience, Caryl reminds us of the kind of county we can be.

Caryl applied for a Section 8 voucher, the program through which the federal government subsidizes market-based rental housing for low-income individuals and families. Due to her disability from the stroke and the domestic violence she experienced, Caryl was able to receive a Section 8 voucher within several months. She felt grateful and guilty at the same time because the wait time for qualified people is often years. For in Section 8, new vouchers are not created according to need, they are "recycled," only becoming available when an individual or a family moves out of Section 8 housing. This is because Section 8 isn't a continually funded program; it requires Congressional appropriation to fund new vouchers.

But getting a voucher was just the first step in a precarious process. "I had a limited amount of time to find an apartment or I would lose the voucher," explained Caryl. "I easily looked at over 20 apartments with my realtor, but landlords would show me the apartment and then they'd tell my realtor that the apartment wasn't available. Ninety percent wouldn't take the Section 8 voucher, despite it being guaranteed payment. My feeling was that they were saying no – because it was Section 8. I know it's hard to accept Section 8 because you think, 'I don't know who I'm getting here'; but really, do you ever

know who you're getting? It felt horrible — you get everything you need and the one thing missing was the apartment. I was so sad that no one would give me a chance to prove that I could live in their town and be a good tenant. But you need a chance! Doesn't everyone need the chance? I was elated that I had the voucher, I would get excited to see the apartments, and then discouraged, totally discouraged after being refused."

"Then one day I got a call from the Section 8 office. A landlady had called to let them know she had an apartment available. This wonderful landlady took the initiative. She also lives in the building with other members of her family. You need a heartfelt person – someone that is willing to help. It could be so easy if everyone could just do it. My church raised the security deposit for me and now I have my own apartment."

"I have been living here for 16 months now in Mamaroneck. How does it feel when I wake up and open my eyes each morning? I have never been so pleased and happy in my life. It's the most beautiful thing in the world. All I want is to have my own bed and my own place to sleep. It's not asking too much. It was hard getting here but I am so happy. I live in this town of hard-working families – it bustles in the morning, with the landscapers, the business people, the cable guys, the children going to school and when the commuters pour off the train from New York City and make their way home. By 9:00pm it's quiet and safe. I feel like I can walk down the street and there's police presence there for you if you need them. To be near the water and see the boats — I love it here. I feel like I belong."

"TO BE NEAR THE WATER AND SEE THE BOATS — I LOVE IT HERE. I FEEL LIKE I BELONG."

ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

NOTE: Individual and organizational members of the Westchester Women's Agenda are responsible for the Recommendations for Action presented throughout this Report and below. They are intended to provide the impetus for focused conversations on solutions to the challenges that women face in the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL WELL BEING FOR WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

The WWA should adopt the following recommended actions some of which have been put forth by the Institute for Women's Policy and Research (IWPR) to improve women's economic status in New York State and Westchester County:

1. Hold employers accountable for obligation to monitor hiring, selection and promotions and review pay and promotion decisions to identify gender and race disparities. Make receipt of public contracts conditional on contractors' reviewing their pay and promotion systems to make sure they are gender neutral and equitably reward skills, efforts and responsibility.
2. Develop new legislation to address barriers to equality such as lack of work/family supports and the unequal treatment of part-time workers.
3. Facilitate access to further education by providing supports for those who face financial and other barriers to completing a degree, such as access to childcare.
4. Ensure that career advice for women and girls explicitly addresses the earnings potential of different field of study and occupations, especially in the STEM fields. Increase opportunities for women to pursue careers in higher-paying technical fields, and monitor vocational training programs to ensure that there is active outreach and support for women pursuing nontraditional careers. [75]
5. Westchester County and other employers in the County should follow the example of New York City which by Executive Order forbids City agencies from inquiring about an applicant's salary history before extending a conditional offer of employment. By eliminating questions regarding an applicant's previous compensation—which is often used as a benchmark from which to determine starting pay in a new position—employers take a vital step to stop perpetuating a cycle of suppressed wages for women and people of color within the workforce.
6. Ensure that federal, state and local government contracts are accessible to women-owned businesses, and make public and private sector investments in loan and entrepreneurial programs that expand small business opportunities for all. Increase technical assistance to women entrepreneurs that helps them to identify opportunities for successful and profitable businesses.[76]

STEM

Companies in Westchester that benefit from economic development investment programs should be required to invest in STEM education and outreach to women and girls. Model programs include the YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester's TechGYrls initiative, which teaches robotics and coding to African American and Latina girls and Sister to Sister International's STEAM Academy for Black and Latina girls that develops a pipeline from middle school to college and careers.

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

Westchester County should improve opportunities for women business owners by:

1. Providing greater access to business training, counseling, and mentoring programs that help women and other small business owners grow sustainable enterprises.
2. Supporting programs to assist entrepreneurs, and women in particular, to achieve annual revenue growth beyond $1 million.
3. Providing greater access to contracting opportunities for M/WBEs from both the public and private sectors.
4. Expanding and supporting opportunities for all small business owners to access capital to grow their businesses.

EQUAL PAY

WWA should sponsor an Equal Pay pledge and honor companies that demonstrate and pledge to give women equal pay.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP BY WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

1. Women should seek out sponsors at corporations and negotiate for higher pay and promotions.
2. Public companies and companies seeking government contracts should be required to disclose the proportion of women in senior management at their companies.
3. The Westchester Business Council and the Westchester County Association should begin to keep track of the proportion of women on boards and in senior management of their members.
4. Women should be encouraged to run for elected office and provided with more opportunities to learn how to run for elected office and get elected.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE THE MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Provide greater financial support to reduce some of the barriers to treatment for low- and middle-income women, e.g. transportation and child care costs.
2. Provide opportunities for training in trauma-informed care with the understanding that the vast majority of clients in general, but women in particular, have experienced trauma (sexual assault and abuse, domestic violence, incarceration, foster care, hospitalization, separation from their families, etc.).
3. Provide cultural competency training to better understand the impact of migration, language acquisition, norms and expectations.
4. Enhance mental health treatment for the most at-risk children with mobile visits so that parents, kids and families can be served in locations that are more comfortable and accessible to them.
5. Educate and train the general community about the facts and data on mental illness in order to reduce the stigma of mental health treatment with programs such as Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid.
6. Provide greater training on the interrelationship between physical and behavioral health, including substance use.
7. Recognize the impact of trauma on women by approaching care from the point of view of "what happened to you" vs. "what's wrong with you."
8. Provide great workforce training and education programs specifically focused on the needs of women.
9. Provide greater access to parenting supports.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Pass a Clinic Access Bill to protect women receiving health care services.
2. Secure County funding to provide sexual and reproductive health in schools to further reduce teen pregnancies and transmission of STIs
3. Provide greater awareness for the communities of need that Family Planning services are available to them. We have seen a decline in patients in the 100% and below Federal Poverty Line.
4. Sustain the reduced rates of teen pregnancy by building on the success of programs such as the joint Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention program being carried out by Planned Parenthood, the YWCA, the JBFCS and the White Plains Youth Bureau which focuses on expanding access to knowledge about birth control while building self-esteem among youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL AND LEGAL WELL BEING OF WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Establish a Westchester County Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) high-risk team comprised of domestic violence advocates, law enforcement, representatives from the judiciary, healthcare and criminal justice system, among others to be identified, to develop and implement coordinated strategies to foster safety for survivors and accountability of offenders.
2. Expand opportunities for prevention with youth in middle school and high school.
3. Expand opportunities for affordable permanent housing.
4. Expand opportunities for transitional housing.
5. Assure availability of Spanish-speaking interpreters at the courthouse.
6. Provide funding from "Enough is Enough" State funding to local advocacy groups to support college-age victims of sexual assault and IPV.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS FOR FAIR AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. Westchester County should immediately conduct a new Housing Needs Assessment; the last assessment was done in 2004.
2. Westchester County should reapply for federal funding for fair and affordable housing to access all possible federal resources for towns and cities in our county to develop this needed housing. Several years ago, Westchester County opted out of CBDG funding. Now, individual Westchester towns have to compete with the rest of New York for State funding.
3. The County should encourage mobility counseling by funding non-profits to educate those who can access Section 8 or other forms of affordable housing about moving out of low-income neighborhoods into communities of opportunity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO MAKE CHILD CARE AFFORDABLE FOR WOMEN IN WESTCHESTER

1. Substantially increase child care subsidy funding at the federal, state and county levels to bring the family share to no more than 10% of family income; allow full implementation of new federal health, safety and quality standards; and raise reimbursement rate increases.
2. Fully fund QUALITYstarsNY, the New York quality rating improvement system to promote continuous quality improvement among child care programs and provide parents with more and better consumer info.
3. Establish a NYS Office of Early Childhood to achieve better coordination of services for young children.
4. Increase the annual cap on Dependent Care Assistance Plans to better align with actual child care costs to assist middle-income families.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION IN SUPPORT OF KINSHIP CARE IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

1. **Stabilize and Increase Funding to Serve Kinship Families.** New York State funds 21 local kinship services providers covering 27 counties, administered by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), including the Kinship Support Program, sponsored by the Family Service Society of Yonkers, serving kinship families throughout Westchester County and a statewide Kinship Navigator. Funding should be increased to establish and maintain programs to assist kinship caregivers in all 62 counties in New York State. These programs can provide assistance, service referrals, caregiver and youth support groups, and parenting training for the families.
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE DATA & INFORMATION-GATHERING

Westchester County should improve opportunities for women by:

1. **Demanding better data, make decisions with a gender lens, and embrace "intersectionality."** Intersectionality is the study of overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination. Any study conducted on the status of women must look at how women of different backgrounds experience problems, and solutions must be based taking these different situations into consideration;
2. **Focusing resources on filling critical gender data gaps**, including knowing how much time women spend on unpaid work, and what this has on their life chances and choices, such as completing education, getting jobs or starting businesses. Greater emphasis should be placed on the additional burdens/stressors faced by women of color;
3. **Improving the processes used for collecting data to ensure accuracy and reliability**, which can reveal who owns assets like stocks, land, property or credit;
4. **Highlighting and circulating and circulate information about evidence based programs and interventions** that are working to improve the status of women so that they can be replicated and used more effectively; and
5. **Amplifying and strengthening organizations and platforms**, such as the WWA and YWCA, that keep gender equality at the center of all development efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

1. The WWA should refer people to become a mentor with “Her Honor” mentoring.
2. Host an info session for young people to join EFLI. Role models of women in leadership are more important now than ever.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION ON “RAISE THE AGE”

- Join the Westchester Children’s Association‘s fight to Raise the Age in New York. See actions that are part of their campaign: *http://raisetheageny.com/*

END NOTES

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