

2014- 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls



Published: October 2015
www.TallahasseeLeonCSWG.com

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Acknowledgements

This report has been made possible due to the diligent work and contributions of many individuals, including each Commissioner serving the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG), volunteers, and the staff and interns at The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, Inc. (Oasis).

2014-2015 Commissioners

Commissioner	Committee Service	Begin Term	End Term	Appointed By
Dr. Ada Puryear Burnette	Sexual Assault Policy Group	5/1/14*	9/30/16	County Commissioner Bill Proctor
Paige Carter-Smith	Community Engagement Committee	5/1/13	9/30/15	City Commissioner Scott Maddox
Gail Dixon	Organizational and Bylaws Committee; Sexual Assault Policy Group	5/1/13*	9/30/15	CSWG
Mildred Hall	Sexual Assault Policy Group	5/1/13	9/30/14	City Commissioner Nancy Miller
R. Jai Gillum	Community Engagement Committee	5/1/13	9/30/15	CSWG
Dr. Roxanne Hughes	Organizational and Bylaws Committee; Chair, Research & Development Committee	5/1/14	9/30/16	County Commissioner Kristin Dozier
Dr. Huberta Jackson-Lowman	Community Engagement Committee	5/1/14*	9/30/16	CSWG
Dr. Elizabeth Jakubowski	Chair, Funding and Budget Committee (ad hoc); Research & Development Committee	5/1/14	9/30/16	CSWG

* Has Served Multiple Terms, + Filled Vacancy



Commissioner	Committee Service	Begin Term	End Term	Appointed By
C. Sha’Ron James	Community Engagement Committee	6/10/14+	9/30/15	County Commissioner Nick Maddox
Jane Johnson	Research & Development Committee	5/1/14	9/30/16	County Commissioner John Dailey
Stephanie Land	Sexual Assault Policy Group	5/1/13*	9/30/15	County Commissioner Jane Sauls
Jessica Lowe-Minor	Chair, CSWG; Organizational and Bylaws Committee; Chair, Sexual Assault Policy Group	5/1/14*	9/30/16	Mayor John Marks
Marion McGee	Vice Chair, CSWG; Organizational and Bylaws Committee	6/19/13+	9/30/15	City Commission at Large
Ruth Nickens	Community Engagement Committee	5/1/14	9/30/16	CSWG
Sharon Ofuani	Community Engagement Committee	11/12/14+	9/30/15	City Commissioner Nancy Miller
Dr. Jeanne O’Kon	Community Engagement Committee; Chair, Organizational and Bylaws Committee	5/1/13*	9/30/15	County Commissioner Bryan Desloge
Kelly Otte		5/1/13*	5/12/14	County Commissioner Nick Maddox
Dr. Cheryl Rainey	Research & Development Committee	5/13/15+	9/30/15	City Commissioner Gil Ziffer

* Has Served Multiple Terms, + Filled Vacancy



Commissioner	Committee Service	Begin Term	End Term	Appointed By
Dr. Cecile Reynaud	Sexual Assault Policy Group	5/1/13	9/30/15	CSWG
Sara Saxner	Chair, Community Engagement Committee; Organizational and Bylaws Committee; Sexual Assault Policy Group	5/1/14	9/30/16	City Commission at Large
Gail Stansberry Ziffer	Community Engagement Committee	5/1/13	4/10/15	City Commissioner Gil Ziffer
Jaye Ann Terry	Leon County Alliance for Girls; Organizational and Bylaws Committee	5/1/14	9/30/16	City Commissioner Andrew Gillum
Veronica Vasquez	Research & Development Committee	5/1/13	9/30/15	County Commissioner Mary Ann Lindley
Marcia Warfel	Community Engagement Committee	5/1/14	9/30/16	CSWG

* Has Served Multiple Terms, + Filled Vacancy

We extend our gratitude to Michelle Bono and Shington Lamy for their hard work in collaboration as liaisons from the City and County, respectively, to the CSWG.



Special thanks to City and County staff members who have helped to ensure the success of the 2014-2015 CSWG

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Mathieu Cavell	Danny Capps
Christine Coble	Lizzy Kelly
Dan Rigo	Cassandra Jackson
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Jasmine Haynes, Intern
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Brittany Johnson, Intern
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Kristin Shelton, Intern

Other Individuals Who Contributed to the 2014-2015 CSWG's Work¹

Jasmine Armstrong	Katrina Alexander
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Chief Michael DeLeo	Sue Dick
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Patrick Fowler	Dr. Shawnta Friday-Stroud
Deputy Chief Darrell Furuseth	Kevin Gilpin
Lashawn Gordon	Wendy Grey

¹ Individuals who contributed to the Sexual Assault Policy Group and the Leon County Alliance for Girls are acknowledged in [Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 4](#), respectively.



Tammy Hamlet	Cynthia Hanifin
Captain Steve Harrelson	Robin Hassler Thompson
Betsy Henderson	Janie Henker
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Captain Kim Petersen	Ellen Piekalkiewicz
Susan Pourciau	Kim Rivers
Katrina Rolle	Cheryl Rowland
Jamie Royal	RoseAnn Scheck
Ashley Schermerhorn	Kelly Sciba
Shacafrika Simmons	Pat Smith
Undersheriff Rob Swearingen	Michelle Tipton
Kyle Touchstone	LaTanya White
Sheriff Mike Wood	Sarah Young



Letter from the Chair

Courage is like a muscle. We strengthen it with use.

— Ruth Gordon

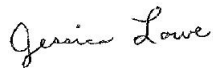
Serving on the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) has exposed me to some of the tremendous acts of courage displayed by women and girls in this community on a near-daily basis. Despite pervasive inequality, discrimination, harassment, assault and abuse, women and girls in Leon County continue to dream big – imagining better futures for themselves and for the generations still to come.

From the courage required of a single mother who knows that the burden of ensuring her family's well-being falls on her and her alone, to that of a woman experiencing street harassment while walking to and from work. Consider the courage required of a widow whose economic security was tied to her now-deceased spouse, or of a young girl being told for the first time that she can't do something simply because "she's a girl." Although not always acknowledged, women and girls in our community have met injustice with courage, daring to defy expectations, overcome obstacles and dismantle barriers in order to achieve their goals.

With so many courageous acts to inspire us, how can we, as a community, not strengthen our own courage muscle by evaluating the status of women and girls in Tallahassee/Leon County and demanding change? Although there is little doubt that women today enjoy increased opportunities over years past, it is also clear that we have a long way to go to reach full parity with men in many areas. As a new mother, I feel particularly compelled by the CSWG's mission and want to do everything possible to ensure that my daughter grows up in a world where she is safe, free from discrimination and fully able to pursue her dreams.

Moving forward, let's strengthen our collective courage by envisioning that future world. By working together as a community, we can help it become real.

Sincerely,



Jessica Lowe-Minor, Chair



About the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls



About the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

In April of 2011, The Leon County Board of County Commissioners established the Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls as a citizens' advisory committee. In March of 2013, the City of Tallahassee (hereafter, the City) joined Leon County (hereafter, the County) and created the new Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG). By establishing and supporting this Commission, the City and County have taken a strong stand in support of women and girls in our community.

The primary purposes of the CSWG are to promote awareness of issues pertaining to women and girls in Tallahassee and Leon County and to serve in an advisory role, providing input to the City and County Commissions as needed.

The joint City/County enabling resolution² creating the CSWG acknowledges that progress has been made, but notes that “there is still work to be done before women and girls achieve economic, education and employment parity.” The resolution also acknowledges “we must understand the current challenges that face our female citizens in order to best equip girls with the knowledge, skills, and equal access to reach for the promise of tomorrow.”

The CSWG consists of 21 members. All CSWG commissioners serve on a volunteer basis. Citizens must apply to be considered for appointment. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and are available for download on the [CSWG's website](#),³ [City's website](#),⁴ and [County's website](#).⁵

The CSWG has produced three reports since its inception: *Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Leon County – 2012*, *A Call to Action: Improving the Status of Women & Girls in Tallahassee/Leon County 2013-2014*, and *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County*. The full reports and executive summaries are available for download on the [CSWG website](#).⁶

The City and County contract with Oasis to staff the CSWG. According to the Oasis staff, supporting the work of the CSWG fits strongly with its mission of “improving the lives of women and girls through celebration and support.” Oasis played a large part in encouraging the community of Tallahassee and Leon County to establish the CSWG. As support to the CSWG, Oasis schedules and notices meetings, maintains records on behalf of the CSWG, attends meetings of the CSWG and its

² Board of County Commissioners, Leon County, Florida. (2013, March 12). *Adopting of an enabling resolution establishing the Tallahassee-Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls*. Retrieved from <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/coadmin/agenda/attach/130312/A0301.pdf>

³ <http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/join-the-commission/>

⁴ <http://talgov.com/treasurer/tlccswg.aspx>

⁵ <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/committees/detail.asp?id=123>

⁶ <http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/research-publications/>



committees, and has served as the managing editorial team for the report that follows. Oasis looks forward with excitement to continuing to serve the CSWG and the community.



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

During 2014-2015, the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) maintained an incredibly full agenda of research, data collection and community-based events designed to raise awareness about major issues impacting women and girls in the Tallahassee/Leon County area.

The primary work of the CSWG this year focused on research, community awareness and creating policy recommendations about two topics:

- Building bridges to economic security for women and girls locally
- Our community's response to sexual violence against women and girls

Significant Accomplishments

Among the major initiatives undertaken by the CSWG this year include:

- Four public hearings throughout the community on economic security for women and girls
- One listening session with female inmates at the Leon County Jail
- One Poverty Simulation hosted in partnership with the United Way of the Big Bend
- One stakeholder meeting focused on increasing entrepreneurship opportunities for low income women
- One "Lunch and Learn" panel discussion highlighting bridges to economic security for women and girls
- One forum on transportation access hosted in collaboration with United Partners for Human Services
- The creation and dissemination of a StarMetro accessibility survey
- The publication of a major report on our community's response to sexual violence
- One news conference highlighting local institutions' responses to sexual violence and featuring key stakeholders and advocates
- Painting and decorating a Tallahassee Police Department interview room specifically for victims of sexual assault

In addition to the above, the CSWG created a Speakers Bureau to provide valuable information about women and girls to community groups and worked with the Leon County Alliance for Girls to support their efforts. The Commission also took steps to formalize policies and procedures, adopt a new attendance policy, and create a Nominating Committee for internal appointments.

Recommendations for Action

Recommendations for Action related to Building Economic Security for Women and Girls

In collaboration with community stakeholders in the private, public, and non-profit sectors when appropriate, the City of Tallahassee and Leon County should:

- Increase focus on employment opportunities for women, including entrepreneurship and resources for women seeking job skill development
- Enlarge public transportation service options to meet the needs of women and other low-income individuals to a greater degree



- Add funding through the Community Human Service Partnership to expand services for women, children, and other individuals who are economically insecure

Recommendations for Action related to our Community’s Response to Sexual Violence

- Keeping victim needs and confidentiality in mind, the community should examine the feasibility of, and implement if possible, a shared data system to track locally occurring incidents of sexual violence.
- Local law enforcement agencies should increase their capacities to conduct in-depth investigations of sexual violence reports by increasing the number of investigators on staff with specific training in both 1) responding to the unique needs of sexual violence victims, and 2) conducting thorough and consistent investigations.
- The local community should work to implement a community-wide awareness program focusing on bystander intervention.

The [full report](#),⁷ *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County*, as well as its [executive summary](#)⁸, are available online.

Report Structure

The report that follows details the work of the CSWG during 2014-2015 organized by committee. The committees and community groups include: Research and Development Committee, Community Engagement Committee, Sexual Assault Policy Group, Leon County Alliance for Girls, Organization and Bylaws Committee.

⁷ Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls [CSWG]. (2015). *Report on sexual violence response in Tallahassee/Leon County*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SAPG_Final-Draft-for-Distribution.pdf

⁸ Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls [CSWG]. (2015). *Report on sexual violence response in Tallahassee/Leon County: Executive summary*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SAPG_Executive-Summary-for-Distribution.pdf.



Introduction



Introduction

2014-2015 Topic of Focus: Building Bridges to Economic Security

For the 2014-2015 CSWG year, Commissioners decided to focus their work on “building bridges to economic security for women and girls.” At their annual retreat in May 2014, Commissioners voted to focus their efforts on one major issue for the 2014-2015 year. Ensuing discussion focused on various potential topics, with the Commissioners ultimately voting to proceed with “building bridges to economic self-sufficiency.” In June 2014, the CSWG hosted an economic self-sufficiency workshop for its Commissioners, inviting speakers Dorothy Inman-Johnson, Former Tallahassee Mayor, and Susan Pourciau, Executive Director of the Big Bend Homeless Coalition,⁹ to share their expertise on the financial concerns of women and girls locally. Much of the conversation focused on how the intersections of race, income, gender, sexual orientation, and other demographics influence the economic self-sufficiency and security of women and girls. Commissioners also heard from Cassandra Dratt, a local entrepreneur, about the barriers she faces as she tries to expand her small business. Based on the content of this workshop, Commissioners agreed at their July 11, 2015 full Commission meeting to amend their focal topic to “building bridges to economic security for women and girls.”

CSWG Organization and Operations

Per the CSWG’s Bylaws, the Chair is responsible for creating ad hoc committees within the year in which she presides. In addition to the standing Organizational and Bylaws Committee, the CSWG Chair, Jessica Lowe-Minor, formed two Committees to orient and focus its work on economic issues facing women and girls locally: the Community Engagement Committee and the Research & Development Committee.

Additionally, in response to the pressing need to address the topic of sexual violence in the community, the CSWG established the Sexual Assault Policy Group (SAPG) as a committee whose work throughout the year was in addition to the CSWG’s work on economic security.

Commissioners solicited participation from interested community members, and local sexual violence experts in particular. Together, the SAPG commissioners and contributors released the *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County* in June 2015. The executive summary and full report are available [online](#).¹⁰ A copy of the executive summary can be found as [Appendix F](#).

In previous commission years, the CSWG helped to catalyze the formation of the Leon County Alliance for Girls, a coalition of girls’ services providers whose mission is “fostering strong inter-agency collaboration with the ultimate goal of providing quality, diverse, gender-specific programs for girls.” This year, the CSWG continued to partner with this group, providing some administrative support as the Leon County Alliance for Girls continues to build capacity for sustainability long-term.

⁹ At the time of publication, Ms. Pourciau is no longer the Executive Director of the Big Bend Homeless Coalition.

¹⁰ <http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/research-publications/>



Recommendations for Action

The CSWG has made three recommendations for action for our community to focus improving economic security for women and girls. The CSWG arrived at these recommendations by holding public hearings regarding financial concerns experienced by women and girls in Fall 2014 and collecting feedback from attendees. The Organizational and Bylaws Committee compared the feedback from the hearings to the recommendations made by the CSWG in their 2013-2014 report, *A Call to Action: Improving the Status of Women and Girls in Tallahassee/Leon County*.¹¹ Through this analysis of blending previous CSWG research with data from public hearings, the Organizational and Bylaws Committee put forth three recommendations for action which formed the CSWG's work plan for the year. The three recommendations for action to build economic security for women and girls, and the related community awareness and advocacy that the CSWG has accomplished, are as follows:

Increase focus on employment opportunities for women, including entrepreneurship and resources for women seeking job skill development

- Commissioners met with individual local stakeholders regarding entrepreneurship opportunities for women experiencing low-incomes. Then a group of stakeholders and Commissioners came together on Friday, August 28th, to discuss strengthening the entrepreneurial infrastructure locally to be inclusive and supportive of women with low-incomes who are potential entrepreneurs. Further details are included in [Chapter 2](#).
- The CSWG hosted a “Lunch and Learn” on “Building Bridges to Economic Success: Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship” on September 17, 2015. Panelists Sue Dick, Kimberly Moore, Shacafrica Simmons, and Robin Hassler Thompson facilitated a community conversation regarding ways our community can support women and girls in Tallahassee and Leon County achieving economic security, discussed further in [Chapter 2](#).

Enlarge public transportation service options to meet the needs of women and other low-income individuals to a greater degree

- The CSWG partnered with StarMetro by facilitating a survey of StarMetro riders and non-riders, in order to better understand women's needs and concerns related to public transportation and to inform StarMetro's service options planning, discussed further in [Chapter 1](#).
- The CSWG also disseminated a survey on economic security for women and girls in Leon County and Tallahassee. The analysis of this data is included in [Chapter 1](#).
- The CSWG published a “My View” article in the *Tallahassee Democrat* to raise awareness about public transportation as an important issue for low-income women and girls and to encourage participation in the StarMetro survey.
- The CSWG co-hosted an advocacy forum with the United Partners for Human Services on public transportation access. This forum was held on August 20, 2015, and included presentations from the CSWG, StarMetro and others along with a facilitated conversation primarily including staff representatives from local non-profit human service organizations.

¹¹ <http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/research-publications/>

Add funding through the Community Human Service Partnership to expand services for women, children, and other individuals who are economically insecure

- The CSWG advocated for an increase in CSHP funding through a collaboration with United Partners for Human Services.
- The Research & Development Committee spearheaded creating two CHSP fact sheets for the community and the City and County to be better informed about CHSP and the impact on local human services.
- The CSWG created a white paper on the increased services more CHSP funding would make possible and published a “My View” article in the *Tallahassee Democrat* on the topic.

Chapter 1: Research & Development Committee



Chapter 1: Research & Development Committee

Commissioners Serving on the Research & Development Committee

Dr. Roxanne Hughes, Chair	Dr. Elizabeth Jakubowski
Jane Johnson	Dr. Cheryl Rainey
Veronica Vasquez	

Introduction

For the 2014-2015 CSWG year, Commissioners agreed to form a Research & Development subcommittee (R&D). Commissioners based this decision on the CSWG’s awareness of the importance of researching issues affecting women and girls in Leon County and Tallahassee. Since its creation, the CSWG has worked with community experts to provide thorough research on issues affecting women and girls. R&D meets monthly and its members have quantitative and qualitative research expertise, as well as a wide range of experiences within the community.

Economic Security Survey

In July 2014, the CSWG decided to focus on the theme of “building bridges to economic security” for the 2014-2015 year. As part of this goal, R&D members, as well as the entire CSWG, met with various stakeholders in the community to listen to their concerns and presentations. As part of this series of community conversations, the CSWG held the following events and meetings:

- June 2014: An Economic Self-Sufficiency Workshop, featuring guest speakers Dorothy Inman-Johnson, Former Tallahassee Mayor; Susan Pourciau, Former Executive Director of the Big Bend Homeless Coalition; and Cassandra Dratt, local entrepreneur. In their presentations, the speakers discussed how demographics (e.g., race, income, sexual orientation, housing situation) often differentially impact local women and girls’ ability to attain economic self-sufficiency and/or security. It was from this conversation that the CSWG decided to use the term “economic security” for the remainder of their year.
- September through November 2014: Four community conversations (public hearings) throughout Tallahassee and Leon County focusing on financial concerns facing women and girls. These conversations included small group and large group discussions among women and men from our community. See [Chapter 2](#) for more details on the public hearings.
- Ongoing: Individual meetings between CSWG members and stakeholders within the community, including Star Metro.
- Ongoing: Meetings with various employment services, including the career centers at Florida State University, Florida A&M University, and Tallahassee Community College, as well as Career Source.

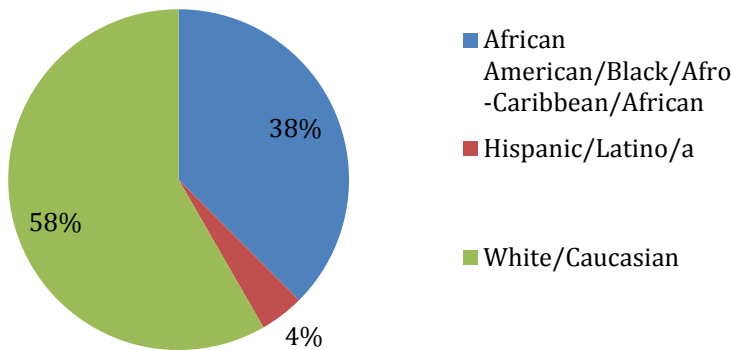
Before the fall community conversations, R&D developed a survey that could be given to participants and other members of our community which can be found in [Appendix A](#). The CSWG Economic Security Survey includes questions related to individuals’ gender, race/ethnicity, marital



status, age, education, income, parental status, concerns related to education/training, transportation, housing, living wages, and childcare/dependent care. Demographics of the survey respondents are provided below.

Among the 24 survey participants, 96% identified as female,¹² with an average age of 36.57 years. Of those who reported employment information ($n=23$), 70% reported employment, while 17% reported being unemployed and 13% reported being retired. Of those who provided a description of their employment status ($n=16$), 81% were employed full time. The average income, including participants of all employment statuses, was \$46,521.74. Racial/ethnic demographics, education level, and partnership status are provided in *Figures 1, 2, and 3, respectively*.

Figure 1: Racial/Ethnic Demographics of Survey Respondents ($n=24$)¹³



¹² The remaining participants (4%) identified as male; however, response options also included *transgender, other (please specify)*, and *would rather not say*.

¹³ Response options also included *Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Other (please specify)*, and *would rather not say*.

Figure 2: Highest Education Level of Survey Respondents (n=24)¹⁴

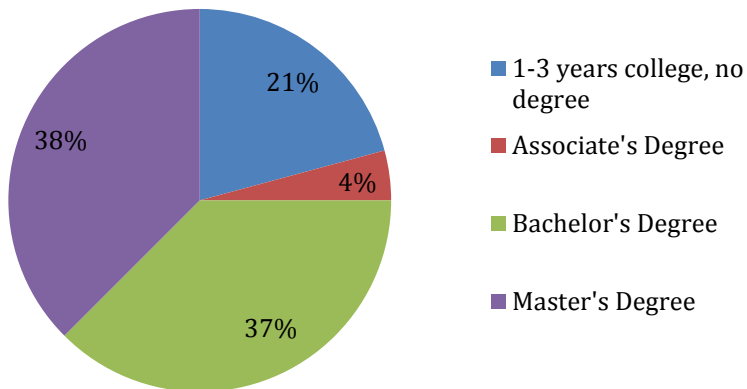
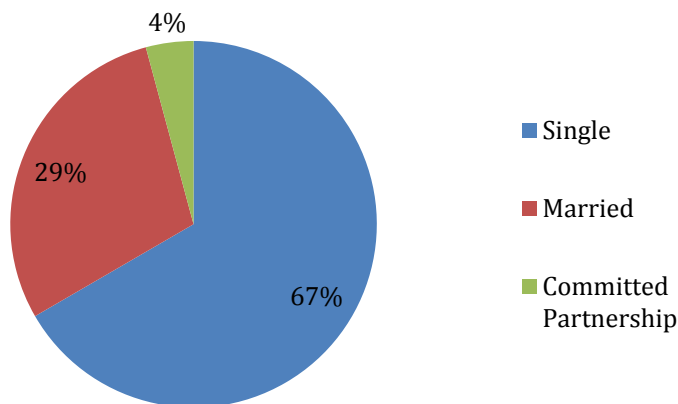


Figure 3: Partnership Status of Survey Respondents (n=24)¹⁵



Once the CSWG decided on its three recommendations for action related to building economic security for women and girls in November 2014, R&D created a plan for the following efforts:

- Create fact sheets to deliver to various stakeholders,
- Partner with StarMetro to collect data on public transportation concerns facing women, and
- Collect data from career centers in Tallahassee and Leon County to determine issues affecting women and girls.

¹⁴ Response options also included *less than high school education, GED, high school diploma, doctorate degree, and professional degree (law, medicine)*.

¹⁵ Response options also included *widowed and other (please specify)*.

Fact Sheets

R&D developed four fact sheets during the 2014-2015 year. For all of the fact sheets described below, R&D members utilized various data sources including: U.S. Census data, Leon County and State of Florida data, interviews with stakeholders, and group interviews with members of the community. All fact sheets were presented at full CSWG meetings for feedback and approval.

About the CSWG

The first fact sheet is a general fact sheet about the CSWG that can be given to members of the community so that they can easily and quickly learn about what the CSWG is, why it was created, how to get involved, and what its Commissioners have accomplished so far (See [Appendix B.1](#)).

Community Human Service Partnership

Two fact sheets were created to address the CHSP recommendation: one for the general public and one for members of the City of Tallahassee Commission (hereinafter, City) and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter, County). The fact sheet for members of the general public provides general information about CHSP for those who may not be aware of this partnership (See [Appendix B.2](#)). The fact sheet for the City and County succinctly explains what CHSP funding does for various local agencies and the community members they serve (See [Appendix B.3](#)). To obtain data for the latter, the CSWG sent a brief survey to executive directors of both CHSP recipient agencies and United Partners for Human Services members asking what their agency could do with additional funding at various levels (i.e., \$10,000; \$25,000; \$50,000; \$75,000), such as increasing the number of clients served, reaching a new target population, and expanding existing programs.

Entrepreneurship

The final fact sheet that R&D developed for the 2014-2015 year included information on entrepreneurship, specifically current issues affecting women (See [Appendix B.4](#)). This fact sheet can be useful for those interested in furthering the conversation about women and entrepreneurship locally.

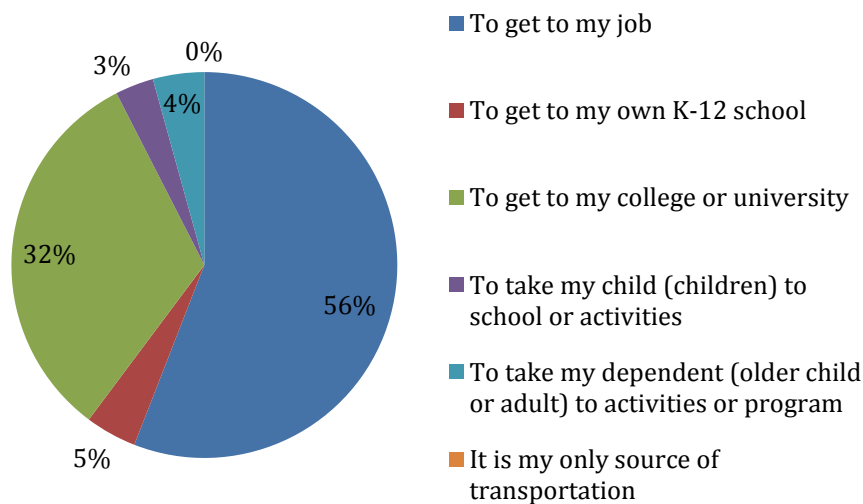
Transportation: StarMetro Partnership

In Fall 2014, R&D members began a conversation with Brian Waterman, StarMetro Planning Manager. This initial conversation indicated that StarMetro gathers input from the community on the various bus lines and other issues affecting riders through an online survey that is open typically for one month each year. StarMetro also collects feedback from bus drivers to determine which routes are being used most efficiently. Mr. Waterman indicated that the survey did not ask for gender identification, so they did not know what, if any, differences in responses existed between women and men. Based on this conversation, R&D members worked with StarMetro to expand upon their online survey. The updated survey asked riders to provide information about their gender/sex, race/ethnicity, zip code, level of use of StarMetro, and suggestions for improvement. The survey was available in April and May of 2015. The CSWG actively recruited survey participation from both riders and non-riders by writing a “My View” article in the *Tallahassee Democrat*, canvassing at the C.K. Steele Bus Plaza and coordinating with local human service agencies. Over 400 people participated in this survey. Results indicated that of the



respondents who used StarMetro to meet half or more of their transportation needs (n=67), over half (57.8%) were females. Among respondents, the most frequent users were in zip codes 32301, 32303, and 32304. The graph below shows the reasons StarMetro was being used by respondents. Over 56% of the respondents (n=457) indicated getting to their job was the primary reason for use. Getting to college or university campuses was the next frequent reason to use StarMetro (32%). Survey participants further indicated their comments for improvements to the StarMetro system. Several themes were identified by survey participants. Among all respondents, concerns about commute time were prevalent. Of female survey respondents that use the public transportation system for 50% or more of their travel, improving the safety of the bus and bus stop infrastructure was one identified theme, as well as the request for more information regarding StarMetro’s function and services provided.

Figure 4: Reasons for StarMetro Use



Summary

The R&D committee has built upon existing data and reports to focus its work on the three recommendations the CSWG made for this year related to building bridges to economic security for women and girls. The work of the R&D committee has resulted in a beneficial partnership with StarMetro, leading to a better understanding of transportation issues affecting women and girls from specific parts of our community. Further, this partnership has created an open line of communication between the CSWG and StarMetro, which will be fruitful for future collaborations. R&D has also developed fact sheets that can be useful to policymakers and members of the general public by succinctly presenting information on the CSWG, CHSP, and women’s entrepreneurship in our community.

Chapter 2: Community Engagement Committee



Chapter 2: Community Engagement Committee

Commissioners Serving on the Community Engagement Committee

Paige Carter-Smith	R. Jai Gillum
Dr. Huberta Jackson-Lowman	C. Sha’Ron James
Ruth Nickens	Sharon Ofuani
Dr. Jeanne O’Kon	Sara Saxner, Chair
Gail Stansberry-Ziffer	Marcia Warfel

Introduction

The Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) recognized the importance of community engagement as part of its purpose to raise awareness about issues affecting women and girls in our community and therefore established the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) for the 2014-2015 CSWG year. Nearly half of all CSWG Commissioners served on the CEC, each bringing unique ideas, experiences, and networks to the committee that contributed to the success of every conversation, event, and program hosted by the CSWG this year. Through five community conversations and listening sessions, a poverty simulation, a community awareness event, and an ongoing speakers bureau, the CEC was a driving force behind engaging hundreds of local community members on the topic of building bridges to economic security for women and girls locally.

Public Hearings (Community Conversations)

In order to be better informed about the economic concerns facing women and girls in Tallahassee and Leon County, the CSWG committed to being engaged in the community from the beginning of its year. Commissioners elected to hold a series of public hearings on financial concerns facing women and girls, with the CEC subsequently deciding to conduct the hearings in demographically and geographically diverse areas of the community: the Woodville Community Center, the Jack McLean Community Center, the LeRoy Collins Main Library, and the Tallahassee Senior Center. The hearings were held at different times of the day on varying weekdays to accommodate a variety of schedules for community participants. In addition to these public hearings, one member of the CEC was granted permission by the Leon County Jail to hold a private listening session at its facility to solicit input from incarcerated women. The four public hearings were advertised in advance via flyers, both online and in the communities where the hearings were to take place (See [Appendix D](#)).

The first hearing was at the Woodville Community Center, with a small, but vocal showing of community members. Based on the CEC’s internal evaluation of the first public hearing, the approach to the subsequent hearings was realigned to follow a community conversation format. Commissioners volunteered to facilitate conversations at small tables of attendees, using a structured list of questions pre-determined by the CEC. Through a partnership with the university community, the CSWG was able to contract graduate students to serve as scribes at each small group. The feedback generated was rich and authentic, allowing community members to express

financial challenges they have personally experienced or witnessed and offer input about what they see as the needs of their neighborhoods and communities.

The succeeding three public hearings were well-attended. The facilitators focused on asking a series of questions around the term “economic security” and how it pertained to participants’ lived experiences, the perception of economic security of women and girls in the community, their top economic concerns, what participants believed needed to happen to address these concerns, and how any recommended changes or action would directly affect women and girls in Tallahassee and Leon County.

Example questions asked during the facilitated conversation include:

- When you hear the words “economic security for women and girls,” what types of things come to mind?
- How would you describe the overall economic situation of women and girls in our community?
- Are there certain economic concerns that you think affect specific groups of women and girls more than others? If so, what are they?
- When it comes to our community, what are a few of your top economic concerns specific to women and girls?
- How, if at all, do these economic concerns affect you personally? Professionally?
- What types of things would you like to see happening in our community that might help with the issues you mentioned previously?
- What differences would you expect to see if something like that was put into place?

A compilation of the notes from each of the public hearings provided direction to the CSWG to determine action moving forward. A few issues that community members discussed were:

- The need for support for female students, both first-time and returning, as well as for potential entrepreneurs;
- Intersections of racism and classism and how we, as a community, need to be aware of these issues as we talk about economic security; and
- The varying, yet similar, needs of women and girls from various family structures – from single women, to single moms, to two-parent families, to older adults – the needs exist across all groups, though they may look slightly different.

In addition to the public hearing data, the Research and Development Committee created an Economic Security Survey (See [Appendix A](#)) that was distributed at each hearing. It was also available in an online format. Participants could complete and submit the survey at the public hearing, by mail, or by hand delivery it to The Oasis Center for Women & Girls. The CSWG analyzed the initial survey results. More information about the Survey can be found in [Chapter 1](#).

Overall, the CSWG drew several conclusions from the community conversations and Survey results, including that there is economic insecurity in multiple pockets of the community and that economic

situations are very diverse depending on the geographic location within the County. Many participants stated that most economic inequality was related to issues of racism, classism, and poverty and that, specifically, there is a lack of visibility of women of color in our community. Based on this, a series of recommendations emerged for further exploration by the CSWG:

- To provide mentorship to girls and women across the lifespan;
- To promote accessibility of information for community members;
- To increase transportation options;
- To increase affordable childcare options;
- To provide support for women caregivers;
- To provide support to women seeking work, including entrepreneurs; and
- To continue to host community conversations.

See [Appendix E](#) for a full summary of the public hearing data which provides rich insight in to the experiences of the women and girls locally.

Poverty Simulation

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women and girls make up 52% of Leon County’s population; this population has a 23% poverty rate, seven percent higher than the entire state¹⁶. In an effort to highlight this impact of this staggering local statistic, the CSWG partnered with the United Way of the Big Bend to host a poverty simulation in February 2015. The purpose of the poverty simulation was to provide insight into what a month in the life of those living in poverty might feel like. Program participants consisted of local elected officials; representatives from public, private, and nonprofit organizations; college students; and community members. With over 100 attendees, participants were grouped into one of several simulated families trying to survive on a limited household income. Over the course of the simulation, families had to make decisions as they navigated work, school, social services, and life’s everyday challenges, such as poor health, layoffs, or being a victim of a crime.

The poverty simulation was one of the CSWG’s major efforts to bring community members and local leaders together to further explore and develop solutions to address this important issue of economic security for women and girls. The City of Tallahassee’s television station, WCOT, produced a segment on the event, which is available to watch [online](#).¹⁷

Speakers Bureau

A CSWG Speakers Bureau was established to spread community awareness about the existence and work of the CSWG. A Power Point presentation about the CSWG’s work has been developed and can be modified for specific groups and their interests. Any Commissioner can participate in such community presentations.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau (2012). Dataset: 2012 ACS 1-year estimates. Demographic and Housing Estimates. Data ID: CP05

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMmAEodqZ0w&feature=youtu.be>

Stakeholder Meeting on Entrepreneurship and Low-Income Women

On August 28, 2015, the CSWG facilitated a meeting among community stakeholders who work in areas such as: supporting and encouraging entrepreneurship, workforce development, serving individuals with low-incomes, or serving women. The goal behind this meeting was to foster collaboration and discussion around the idea of supporting entrepreneurship among women with low-incomes in our community. Based on discussion at this meeting, the CSWG plans to hold at least one additional meeting, where stakeholders will assist in creating a map of the current infrastructure for low-income women potentially interested in becoming entrepreneurs. By doing this, the CSWG will help identify service gaps and assist stakeholders in brainstorming ways to work together to fill gaps and increase coordination to serve this population of women.

Community Awareness Event

On September 17, 2015, the CSWG hosted an event about bridges to economic security for women, highlighting three focus areas: education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

Four panelists representing various sectors of the community participated in the “Lunch and Learn” which was held at The Lively Café at St. John’s Episcopal Church. In an effort to enhance the conversation and make the event meaningful to participants, additional local women who are leaders in the community volunteered to serve as table moderators to engage the attendees in discussion of the topic. These women were selected because the CSWG believed that they have unique experiences and stories to share, as well as the capacity to facilitate meaningful dialogue among attendees. Participants were able to converse with their moderator and each other, either by following a list of questions or allowing the conversation to flow naturally. Over 100 individuals in the Tallahassee and Leon County community participated in the event and engaged in discussions related to building economic security for women and girls in our community.

Summary

The CEC connected with the public to understand the economic concerns facing women and girls in the community. Because of the aforementioned events and outreach strategies, the CEC was able to hear from those who experience economic insecurity issues every day. This assisted in formulating the 2014-2015 CSWG’s three overarching recommendations for the year, which aim to offer targeted solutions to several of the challenges reported by women in the community.



Chapter 3: Sexual Assault Policy Group



Chapter 3: Sexual Assault Policy Group

Commissioners Serving on the Sexual Assault Policy Group (SAPG)

Dr. Ada Puryear Burnette	Gail Dixon
Mildred Hall	Stephanie Land
Jessica Lowe-Minor, Chair	Cecile Reynaud

Introduction

In early 2014, the Tallahassee/Leon County community was engaging in an important conversation about sexual violence, specifically how cases of sexual violence are addressed. When the new Commission year began in May 2014, Commissioners agreed that the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) should be a part of this important conversation, leading to the creation of an ad hoc CSWG Committee: the Sexual Assault Policy Group (SAPG).

Commissioners serving on the SAPG invited local community members with expertise in the area of sexual violence to attend the SAPG meetings and contribute to the work of the Group. These community contributors assisted Commissioners in carrying out a three-phase research process:

1. “Conduct fact-finding to determine what local policies, procedures, and services related to sexual assault were currently in place;
2. Determine what models are considered national ‘best practices’; and
3. Develop recommendations that would assist the community in improving its response and prevention efforts.”¹⁸

This process was implemented for six distinct categories related to sexual violence: prevention, medical care, follow up, school and workplace response, investigation and prosecution, and interagency collaboration.

Sexual Assault Policy Group Community Contributors

Anna Benbrook, FSU Health Promotion, Sexual Health Educator
Jennifer Gagen, FSU Victim Advocate Program, Associate Director
Julia Kamm-Cohen, Refuge House, SART and Youth Services Coordinator
Natalie Kato, Human Rights Watch, US Southern State Policy Advocate
Sara LaTorre, Tallahassee Police Department, Victim Advocate
Theresa Prichard, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, Director of Advocacy/LAV Project Director
Kori Pruett, FSU Health Promotion, Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator
Rose Rezaei, FSU Health Promotion, Assistant Director

¹⁸ Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls [CSWG]. (2015). *Report on sexual violence response in Tallahassee/Leon County: Executive summary*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from http://tallahasseeleononcswg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SAPG_Executive-Summary-for-Distribution.pdf.

In addition to regular community contributors, several other members of the community helped to make the *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County* possible. Those individuals are Sergeant Joanna Baldwin, Cici Battle, Lorena Vollrath-Bueno, Micheala Denny, Crystal Kelly, Dominique Mack, Laura MacKinnon, Emily Mitchem, Susan Parmalee, Helene Potlock, Dr. Danette Saylor, Robin Hassler Thompson, Erin VanSickle, and Gwen Williams.

Summary of Findings

To provide the most comprehensive reporting of sexual violence response in the community, the SAPG and its community contributors contacted over 50 stakeholders, who provided information about their individual agencies and verified the findings. What the SAPG found is that while there are areas of response that could be strengthened, the local community is already engaging in efforts to improve services for victims of sexual violence. For those perceived areas of improvement, the SAPG made three recommendations:¹⁹

1. “Keeping victim needs and confidentiality in mind, the community should examine the feasibility of, and implement if possible, a shared data system to track locally occurring incidents of sexual violence.
2. Local law enforcement agencies should increase their capacities to conduct in-depth investigations of sexual violence reports by increasing the number of investigators on staff with specific training in both 1) responding to the unique needs of sexual violence victims, and 2) conducting thorough and consistent investigations.
3. The local community should work to implement a community-wide awareness program focusing on bystander intervention.”

The [full report](#),²⁰ *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County*, as well as its [executive summary](#)²¹, are available online.

Press Conference

On June 22, 2015, the SAPG hosted a press conference for the release of the *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County*, in conjunction with Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare. The conference served the dual purpose of introducing the *Report* to the community and unveiling the location of the new Refuge House SANE²² facility, a stand-alone facility on the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls [CSWG]. (2015). *Report on sexual violence response in Tallahassee/Leon County*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SAPG_Final-Draft-for-Distribution.pdf

²¹ Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls [CSWG]. (2015). *Report on sexual violence response in Tallahassee/Leon County: Executive summary*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SAPG_Executive-Summary-for-Distribution.pdf.

²² “SANE” is the acronym for “Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner.”

TMH campus that will provide more privacy for victims of sexual violence to receive forensic exams and medical care following an assault.

The press conference was well attended by community members and local leaders. The distinguished speakers included:

- Meg Baldwin, Executive Director, Refuge House
- Mark O'Bryant, CEO, Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare
- Deputy Chief Darrell Furuseth, Tallahassee Police Department
- Undersheriff Rob Swearingen, Leon County Sheriff's Office
- Deputy Assistant State Attorney Georgia Cappleman, Office of the State Attorney, 2nd Judicial Circuit
- Commissioner Bill Proctor, Vice-Chairman of the Leon County Board of County Commissioners
- Commissioner Nancy Miller, City of Tallahassee Commission

The CSWG would like to extend its sincere gratitude to Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, and their public relations team in particular, for hosting the press conference. The CSWG is also very appreciative of the speakers and their supportive remarks.

Coverage of the Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County

The CSWG is very pleased with the community response to the *Report*. Various news outlets covered the Report release and its contents, several of which are noted below:

- *WTXL*: [New Report on Sexual Violence in Tallahassee and Leon County](#)²³
- *WTXL*: [Tallahassee Committee Trying to Put End to Sexual Assault](#)²⁴
- *FSUView*: [Tallahassee Sexual Violence Report](#)²⁵
- *Tallahassee Democrat*: [Stakeholders Tackle Sexual Violence](#)²⁶
- *Tallahassee Democrat*: [Local Sexual Assault Report Shows Progress, Needs](#)²⁷
- *WFSU-FM*: [Commission Set to Implement Bystander Intervention Program](#)²⁸

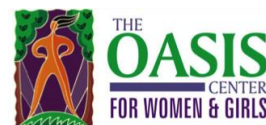
²³Vaughn, M., & Jiwanmall, S. (2015, June 22). New report on sexual violence in Tallahassee and Leon County. *WTXLTV*. Retrieved from http://www.wtxl.com/news/new-report-on-sexual-violence-in-tallahassee-and-leon-county/article_bf592c2a-191d-11e5-83cf-6f6c6ade024f.html

²⁴Bulecza, J. (2015, July 20). Tallahassee committee trying to put end to sexual assault. *WTXL TV*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from http://www.wtxl.com/news/tallahassee-committee-trying-to-put-end-to-sexual-assault/article_101ecc7a-2f2e-11e5-8af6-67941f5e8c7e.html

²⁵Zeballos, J. (2015, June 24). Tallahassee sexual violence report. *FSUNews.com*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from <http://www.fsunews.com/story/news/2015/06/24/tpd-sexual-assault-report/29234001/>

²⁶Rossmann, S. (2015, June 22). Stakeholders tackle sexual violence. *Tallahassee Democrat*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from <http://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2015/06/22/stakeholders-tackle-sexual-violence/29136033/>

²⁷Lowe-Minor, J. (2015, June 23). Local sexual assault report shows progress, needs. *Tallahassee Democrat*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from <http://www.tallahassee.com/story/opinion/2015/06/23/local-sexual-assault-report-shows-progress-needs/29172331/>



In addition to press coverage of the *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County*, the SAPG requested members of the community to use the social media hashtag #ItsOnUsTallahassee to promote the *Report* and keep this important conversation going strong.

Next Steps

The SAPG is invested in working with the community to see the aforementioned recommendations come to fruition. Currently, the SAPG is researching existing models of tracking sexual violence using common data indicators. In the future, the SAPG hopes to work with local stakeholders to determine the best feasible way to move forward with better tracking of local incidents of sexual violence. In addition, Commissioners plan to meet with local law enforcement agencies to follow up on their second recommendation and determine if, and how, the CSWG can assist or advocate for agencies willing to accept this recommendation. Finally, the CSWG collaborated with the Department of Health in Leon on a grant application in an attempt to obtain external funding to implement a community-wide bystander intervention program. While this grant proposal was not selected for funding, the CSWG remains committed to working in collaboration with local partners to support such an initiative in the future.

In addition to following up on the aforementioned recommendations, the SAPG is currently extending its research to produce an addendum to the original *Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County*. The addendum will focus specifically on sexual violence and girls (ages 5-18). This addendum will follow a similar process as the initial *Report*.

²⁸ Editor. (2015, July 23). Commission set to implement bystander intervention program. *WFSU-FM*. Retrieved August 5, 2015 from <http://news.wfsu.org/post/commission-set-implement-bystander-intervention-program>



Chapter 4: Leon County Alliance for Girls



Chapter 4: Leon County Alliance for Girls

Commission Liaison and Chair of the Leon County Alliance for Girls (LCAG)

Jaye Ann Terry, CSWG Liaison to the Leon County Alliance for Girls

Lashawn Gordon, Chair of the Leon County Alliance for Girls (Community Member)

Introduction

In order to effectively serve girls, you must have passion, patience, and the courage to advocate for them.

~Lashawn Gordon, Chair, Leon County Alliance for Girls

Based on research and public hearings conducted by the 2012 CSWG, it became apparent to Commissioners that there was “little to no coordination between organizations that provide services to girls or even a shared knowledge of each other.”²⁹ The CSWG concluded that “it would be beneficial to the girls of Leon County if there was some kind of coordinated effort to understand their needs, reduce duplication of services, and highlight where gaps in services occur.”³⁰ Thus, the CSWG established the Girls Committee to convene a coalition of organizations that serve girls in our community. The ultimate goal of the group was to “increase the knowledge of available services to the organizations that are focused on serving girls as well as to increase networking and collaborative opportunities.”³¹ The Girls Committee served as a catalyst for the creation of the Girls Services Coalition, which held its inaugural meeting on March 26, 2013.³²

During the 2013-2014 CSWG year, the Girls Services Coalition consulted with a successful girls’ services coalition in Jacksonville to learn best practices, held several informative meetings, and expanded its mission to include identifying the most pressing issues facing girls in our community. More details can be found in the [CSWG’s 2013-2014 report](#).

During the 2014-2015 CSWG year, the Girls Services Coalition was renamed the Leon County Alliance for Girls (LCAG). Still under the auspices of the CSWG, the LCAG made significant strides to become autonomous and meet the goal of increasing networking and collaborative opportunities. This shift to independence began with a change in leadership structure to the LCAG, the intent of which was to empower girls’ services providers to ultimately take ownership of the LCAG. Lashawn Gordon, Program Director at PACE Center for Girls in Tallahassee, was appointed as the Chair of the LCAG, while CSWG Commissioner Jaye Ann Terry served as a liaison between the LCAG and the CSWG. Though the LCAG is now independent of the CSWG (see below), a CSWG Commissioner will continue to serve as a liaison between LCAG and CSWG.

²⁹ Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. (2014). *A call to action: Improving the status of women and girls in Tallahassee/Leon County 2013-2014* (p. 93). Retrieved from http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/A-Call-to-Action_PDF.pdf

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Mission and Vision Statement

In July 2015, the LCAG held a half-day strategic planning session to revise its mission and vision statements. On August 12, 2014, LCAG members unanimously voted to approve both statements.

The mission statement of the LCAG is as follows:

Fostering strong inter-agency collaboration with the ultimate goal of providing quality, diverse, gender-specific programs for girls.

The vision statement for the LCAG is as follows:

Leon County Alliance for Girls is dedicated to providing its members with opportunities for networking, education, and advocacy.

Summary of Activities

Beginning in September 2014, each monthly meeting of the LCAG was held at the venue of a member service provider. This was an effective way for members to gain in-depth knowledge of the services and resources offered by the various organizations. LCAG members provided training at several of these meetings. Some of the topics covered include sexual violence, infant mortality, and anti-bullying strategies. During the meetings, LCAG members reported on upcoming events and needs of their organizations so that other member agencies could provide support and resources when possible. For example, LCAG members distributed flyers and sent e-mails to promote the opening of Wisdom's Wellspring, a new organization that provides housing and other services for girls and young women ages 18-30.

The LCAG and the CSWG would like to acknowledge the following agencies for hosting LCAG meetings throughout the year:

PACE Center for Girls, September 2014
Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Big Bend, October 2014
Wisdom's Wellspring, November 2014
Whole Child Leon, December 2014
Palmer Munroe Teen Center, January 2015
Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition, February 2015
The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, March 2015
Ladies Learning to Lead, April 2015

The LCAG's goal for the coming year is to host a training and continuing education event concerning an issue affecting girls in our community.

Independence

On March 26, 2015, Chair Lashawn Gordon convened several of the regular members of the LCAG, as well as the CSWG Chair, Jessica Lowe-Minor, to discuss next steps for the LCAG. Based on this

meeting, and in consultation with Assistant County Attorney Dan Rigo, the CSWG decided by a unanimous vote that, as of April 10, 2015, the LCAG would operate independent of the CSWG. Specifically:

Only one Commissioner will serve as a liaison and attend Leon County Alliance for Girls meetings. The Commissioner liaison will provide a verbal report to the Commission on updates pertaining to the Leon County Alliance for Girls and solicit collective input from members of the Leon County Alliance for Girls when appropriate. The CSWG continues to believe in the mission, vision, and goals of the Leon County Alliance for Girls and will continue to partner with LCAG as a community stakeholder in the future.³³

As part of this ongoing collaboration, the CSWG “recognizes Oasis’ authority to continue to lend administrative support to LCAG on behalf of the CSWG at their discretion.”³⁴

List of Members/Agencies

The LCAG’s growth and journey to independence has been largely contingent on the participation of local girls’ services providers. Over the course of twelve meetings in the 2014-2015 year, the LCAG hosted 43 unique attendees. The following is a list of the individuals who attended the LCAG meetings and contributed to its growth and development:

Leon County Alliance for Girls Attendees

Courtney Atkins, Whole Child Leon	Amy Beleckas, The Oasis Center for Women and Girls (Oasis)
Marie Bryant, Whole Child Leon	Logan Byrd, Palmer Munroe Teen Center (PMTC)
Christina Chapman, Guardian ad Litem	Haley Cutler, Oasis
Felicia Dilbert, Refuge House	Nicole Evans, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Big Bend (BBBS)
Monica Flowers, PMTC	Denee Glenn, Capital Area Healthy Start
Etheria Goosby, Oasis	Lashawn Gordon, PACE Center for Girls (PACE)
Glen Marie Hamilton, BBBS	Cynthia Hannifin, Student
Amy Harvey, Oasis	LaToya Jefferson, PMTC
Amy Jones, Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle	Julia Kamm-Cohen, Refuge House
Julienne Irwin, Communities in Schools at Leon County	Taryn Jackson, Dare to Dream Young Girls
Danielle Lentchner, Oasis	Annelise Mennicke, Oasis
Michelle Myers, Whole Child Leon	Kendra Moore, PMTC
Kara Olive-Hall, Community Member	Martha Olive-Hall, Former CSWG Commissioner

³³ Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls: Full Commission Meeting. (2015, April 10). *Meeting minutes*. Retrieved from the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

³⁴ Ibid.

Kelly Otte, PACE	Kelly Parker, PACE
Reverend Alyce Parmer, Wisdom's Wellspring	Briana Pemberton, PMTC
Jessica Pinto, Refuge House	Demali Prince, PMTC
Manuela Queliz, PMTC	Roxanne Ruddock, BBBS
Felicia Stanley, Yep She Kan Creations	Lindsay Sternberg, Department of Juvenile Justice
Kristie Teal, BBBS	Brenda Thomas, PMTC
Samantha Vance, Ladies Learning to Lead	Minesha White, SoUnique
Shakira Wilkerson, Dare to Dream Young Girls	Candace Williams, Dare to Dream Young Girls
Kara Yancey, BBBS	

Special thanks to the representatives from the Palmer Munroe Teen Center, The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, PACE Center for Girls, Refuge House, Ladies Learning to Lead, Girls Scouts of the Florida Panhandle, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Big Bend, Wisdom's Wellspring, and Whole Child Leon for their regular participation in the LCAG.

LCAG would also like to acknowledge CSWG Commissioners Dr. Ada Puryear Burnette, Stephanie Land, and Jessica Lowe-Minor for attending and contributing to various LCAG meetings throughout the year.



Chapter 5: Organizational and Bylaws Committee



Chapter 5: Organizational and Bylaws Committee

Commissioners Serving on the Organizational and Bylaws Committee

Gail Dixon	Dr. Roxanne Hughes
Jessica Lowe-Minor	Marion McGee
Dr. Jeanne O’Kon, Chair	Sara Saxner
Jaye Ann Terry	

Introduction

The Organizational and Bylaws Committee (OBC) serves to address organizational issues related to the CSWG as a whole and provide a way for Commissioners to discuss CSWG business outside of full CSWG meetings. This year, Chairs of the other CSWG Committees sat on the OBC, as well as one additional Commissioner, to shepherd changes in policies and procedures and organized events, among many accomplishments.

The OBC addressed a number of important issues for the CSWG during the 2014-2015 year. Some activities were addressed solely within the Committee, while others were organized and put forth for full CSWG consideration. The major actions taken by the OBC this year are outlined below.

Major Actions Taken by the Committee

Committee Structure

The CSWG Chair, who sits on the OBC, is responsible for determining the committee structure of the CSWG. This year, she established three ad hoc committees: the Community Engagement Committee (CEC), the Research & Development Committee (R&D) and the Sexual Assault Policy Group (SAPG). Additionally, the CSWG continued to liaise with the Leon County Alliance for Girls (LCAG), a coalition of girls’ services providers. Commissioners were assigned to at least one Committee based on their preferences.

The 2014-2015 OBC structure, in particular, has been very beneficial to the CSWG due to its membership being comprised of CSWG leadership. The CSWG Chair, Jessica Lowe-Minor, appointed one Commissioner, Dr. Jeanne O’Kon, to serve as OBC Chair. Additional CSWG leaders (i.e., CSWG Vice Chair and Committee Chairs) were asked to participate as OBC members as well. This resulted in an even number of Commissioners, so an at-large representative was also asked to serve in the event that any voting action resulted in a tie. The OBC members believe this structure assisted in the facilitation of improved collaboration between various Committees compared to years past, as Committee Chairs could serve as representatives for their respective Committees and effectively communicate with other leadership about the current happenings within each Committee.

New Commissioner Orientation

Commissioners newly appointed to the CSWG attended an orientation that provided them with an overview of the CSWG’s history, bylaws and enabling resolution, policies and procedures, and Commissioner expectations. Because the CSWG is subject to Florida Sunshine Laws, Public Records



Laws and Code of Ethics, Oasis staff provided a summary of the necessary requirements for all new Commissioners. New Commissioners also learned about Oasis' role in assisting the CSWG, and left orientation with an understanding of how the CSWG functions.

Hosting of Annual Retreat

An all-day retreat was held to allow Commissioners the opportunity to discuss major issues affecting women and girls in the Tallahassee/Leon County community as well as establish what the CSWG's priorities and goals would be for the 2014-2015 Commission year. In addition to helping the CSWG organize its work, the retreat provided an opportunity for team-building and fellowship among Commissioners, and was considered a great success by those who were able to attend.

Prioritization of CSWG Recommendations

The OBC examined notes from the CSWG's series of public hearings held in the local community and reviewed recommendations made by the CSWG in 2013-2014. Ultimately, the OBC set forth three recommendations which framed the work of the CSWG for the remainder of the year:

- Increase focus on employment opportunities for women, including entrepreneurship and resources for women seeking job skill development
- Enlarge public transportation service options to meet the needs of women and other low-income individuals to a greater degree
- Add funding through the Community Human Service Partnership to expand services for women, children, and other individuals who are economically insecure

Revision of Attendance Policy

A revised attendance policy, which includes a new point-based system and quarterly attendance updates, was developed for managing the attendance and absences of the Commissioners at both full CSWG and Committee meetings. The OBC reviewed examples from other City and County citizen's advisory committees to provide structure and guidance. Ultimately, the OBC developed a novel point-based system, wherein Commissioners accrue one point for each regularly scheduled full CSWG meeting missed and one-half point for each regularly scheduled Committee meeting missed. Any Commissioner who accrues five points within the current CSWG year is asked to resign from the CSWG. The Staff Liaison to the CSWG provides Commissioners with quarterly attendance updates detailing how many points Commissioners have accrued throughout the Commission year. The OBC considers this policy to reflect the high expectations the CSWG sets for its Commissioners so that high-quality work is produced in the most collaborative manner possible but also allows for the necessary flexibility for busy women to successfully serve on the CSWG. The Commissioner Agreement, a form signed by each CSWG Commissioner acknowledging the expectations of her role, was revised accordingly.

Election Procedures

The OBC completed a revision of the Election Procedures for new Commissioners. The election and appointment of new Commissioners will take place in September each year.

The OBC also revised the CSWG Bylaws to accurately reflect the election timeline, the terms, and the roles of the elected Chair and Vice Chair of the CSWG.



Establishment of a Nominating Committee

The OBC in partnership with the CSWG Chair established a Nominating Committee, to be chaired by the CSWG Vice Chair. The OBC appoints four additional Commissioners to serve as members. This Committee develops selection criteria and a rubric for evaluating the applications of potential CSWG Commissioners. The Committee reviews all applications to the CSWG and presents a short list of applicants for the CSWG's consideration. However, all CSWG Commissioners are welcome to review and recommend the appointment of any applicant.

Interest Meetings

This year, in addition to carrying out the aforementioned duties, the Nominating Committee hosted two information sessions for potential new applicants to the CSWG in Spring 2015. The Committee provided a packet to each attendee, which included information on the history of the CSWG; an explanation of the current CSWG structure; major documents of the CSWG (i.e., Enabling Resolution, Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, Commissioner Agreement); executive summaries of previously released CSWG reports; anticipated appointment action for the upcoming CSWG year (e.g., anticipated vacancies, appointing individuals and bodies); a list of the 2014-2015 CSWG recommendations; and a summary of what the 2014-2015 CSWG has accomplished. Staff and Commissioners were present at these meetings to answer questions from members of the public. The OBC intends to continue these information sessions on an annual basis, as its members agreed it is very valuable to potential applicants and allows current Commissioners to engage with said applicants.

Plan for Stakeholder Follow Up

The OBC began to develop a systematic plan for meeting with community stakeholders and following up to see that many of the recommendations made in the CSWG's previous annual reports are implemented. This is an ongoing effort, and the 2013-2014 report recommendations relating to the theme of "Building Bridges to Economic Security for Women and Girls" were prioritized as most important for the 2014-2015 CSWG year.

Aligning of Operating and Fiscal Year

The CSWG year start date was changed from May 1 to October 1 to align its operating and fiscal years. Accordingly, the Commissioner terms for this year were extended to align with the fiscal and operating year. The current Commissioner terms that were set to expire on April 30, 2015 were extended through September 30, 2015, with City and County approval.

Summary

The OBC continues to provide useful administrative infrastructure for the Commission, functioning in a manner that is similar to that of an Executive Committee. Final decision-making authority for all issues that come before the OBC rests with the full Commission or the CSWG Chair, depending on the nature of the issue.

During the 2014-2015 year, this Committee provided significant leadership in refining the Commission's internal operating processes, as well as in coordinating interaction with vital community stakeholders.



Chapter 6: Next Steps



Chapter 6: Next Steps

This year, the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls chose to focus on two primary topics: economic security for women and girls and our community's response to sexual violence. In order to really make an impact in these critical areas, the CSWG concentrated its advocacy efforts around three major recommendations in each category.

In order to increase economic security for women and girls in Tallahassee/Leon County, the CSWG recommended the following:

- **Increase focus on employment opportunities for women, including entrepreneurship and resources for women seeking job skill development**
- **Enlarge public transportation service options to meet the needs of women and other low-income individuals to a greater degree**
- **Add funding through the Community Human Service Partnership (CHSP) to expand services for women, children, and other individuals who are economically insecure.**

It is exciting to report that great progress has been made in all of the above areas. The CSWG has held a number of events related to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls, including a “Lunch and Learn” panel discussion featuring experts and advocates, as well as a stakeholder meeting attended by representatives from across the economic development and human services sectors. Additionally, CSWG members worked with StarMetro to develop and distribute a survey identifying barriers to ridership for local residents, and the CSWG helped collect over 400 responses. Finally, along with other engaged advocates from throughout the community, the CSWG played an active role in encouraging the Leon County Commission to increase its funding for CHSP from \$825,000/year to \$1,000,000. Additionally, the CSWG worked to encourage the Tallahassee City Commission to increase its support from approximately \$1,158,000/year to \$1,600,000. Although there is still a wide gap between the community's need and the funding available for CHSP, the local governments' increased investment will go a long way towards ensuring that all of the region's residents can access the critical health and human services they need.

In order to improve the community's response to incidences of sexual violence, the CSWG proposed the following recommendations:

- **Increase local law enforcement's' capacity to conduct in-depth investigations of sexual violence reports by increasing the number of investigators on staff with specific training in both 1) responding to the unique needs of sexual violence victims, and 2) conducting thorough and consistent investigations**



- **Examine the feasibility of, and implement if possible, a shared data system to track locally occurring incidents of sexual violence**
- **Work to implement a community-wide awareness program focusing on bystander intervention.**

As with its economic security recommendations, the Commission has seen a robust response to its suggestions for improved sexual violence response locally. Both Tallahassee Police Department and Florida State University Police Department have added specially-trained personnel, and there are plans to bring more even investigators online at TPD in the years ahead. Recently, the State Attorney's Office convened a task force of key stakeholders to develop a shared tracking system for sexual violence cases, and two local institutions -- Refuge House and Florida State University -- have received funding to implement bystander intervention training programs. These significant advancements underscore the community's commitment to improving its response to sexual violence, and the CSWG is proud to have contributed in a meaningful way this past year towards that shared goal.

Among the "next steps" that the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls proposes are a continued commitment by the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and other stakeholders to the implementation of the priority recommendations outlined above. While many of the items on the list have started to be addressed in some form or fashion, the complexity of these issues demands a "long-view" approach. Although it is tempting to look for quick fixes and then move on, the path to full parity for women and girls is a long and winding one. The CSWG is committed to walking that path for as long as it takes to ensure that women and girls in Tallahassee/Leon County are able to lead their best lives, free from gender-based violence and economic insecurity. The CSWG looks forward to working with community leaders, stakeholders and citizens for years to come to make Tallahassee/Leon County a better, more equitable community for all of its residents.



Appendices



Appendices

A: Copy of Economic Security Survey

B: Fact Sheets

B.1: CSWG Fact Sheet

B.2: CHSP Fact Sheet: General Information

B.3: CHSP Fact Sheet: City and County

B.4: Entrepreneurship and Women Fact Sheet

C: Copy of StarMetro Survey

D: Public Hearing Flyers

D.1: Flyer for Public Hearings 1-3

D.2: Flyer for Public Hearing 4

E: Public Hearing Summary Document

F: Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County Executive Summary

G: Published “My View”s/Letters to the Editor

G.1: *Tallahassee Democrat* “My View”: Identity Theft

G.2: *Tallahassee Democrat* “My View”: CHSP

G.3: *Tallahassee Democrat* “My View”: StarMetro Survey

G.4: *Tallahassee Democrat* “My View”: Sexual Assault Policy Group Report

G.5: *Tallahassee Democrat* Letter to the Editor: Sexual Assault Interview Room

G.6: *Capital Outlook*: Sexual Assault Policy Group Report

H: CSWG Media Mentions

H.1: Articles about CSWG’s Work

H.2 : Media Mentions of the CSWG and Commissioners



Appendix A: Copy of Economic Security Survey

CSWG: Economic Security Survey

The Leon County/Tallahassee Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is seeking input from members of our community regarding the issues that affect women and children. Specifically we are interested in hearing about issues that women in our community might have with transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and/or earning a living wage. Your responses to the following survey will help us to understand what issues the city and county should prioritize over the next few years to address the needs of our community. Thank you in advance.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your gender identity?

Male Female Transgender

Other (please specify) _____ Would rather not say

2. What is your race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply:

African American/Black/Afro-Caribbean/African Hispanic/Latino/a

Asian/Pacific Islander White/Caucasian

Native American/Alaska Native Would rather not say

Other (please specify) _____

3. What is your marital status?

Single Married Committed Partnership



Widowed Other (please specify) _____

4. What is your age (in years)?

years old

5. Which best describes highest level of education?

- Less than high school education GED
 High School Diploma 1-3 years of college, no degree
 Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree Doctorate Degree
 Professional Degree (law, medicine)

6. Are you the sole caregiver for family members in your home?

Yes No I do not have any family members in my home.

7. I live with my partner.

Yes No Not Applicable

8. Are you a Veteran returning to the Workplace?

Yes No

9. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

Self-Employed Employed



Unemployed Retired

10. Which of the following best describes your employment?

Full time (40 hours per week) Multiple Jobs (more than 40 hours per week)

Part time (less than 40 hours per week) Multiple Jobs (less than 40 hours per week)

Not Applicable, I am not currently employed.

11. If you are not currently working, are you actively seeking employment now?

Yes No Not Applicable

12. If you are currently seeking work, how long have you been looking?

Less than 1 month 1-3 months

3-6 months 6-12 months

More than 12 months Not Applicable

13. What is your annual household income?

Less than \$10,000 \$10,000 - \$20,000 \$20,000 - \$30,000

\$30,000 - \$40,000 \$40,000 - \$50,000 \$50,000 - \$60,000

\$70,000 - \$80,000 \$80,000 - \$90,000 \$90,000 - \$100,000

More than \$100,000

14. What is your zip code?



ISSUES AFFECTING ECONOMIC SECURITY

15. Please indicate which of the following issues affect you by agreeing or disagreeing with each statement. (Circle one)

I do not have convenient and safe transportation to and from work and home.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
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My current income is not meeting my needs.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
--	-------	----------	----------------

My current housing situation is structurally unsafe (e.g., physical problems with the home).	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
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My partner makes me feel unsafe.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
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I do not have quality childcare.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
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I do not have affordable childcare.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
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I do not have childcare that fits my schedule. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I cannot find information on job trainings or job openings. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I do not have the training or skills needed for the job I would like. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I do not have the education needed for the job I would like. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I do not have affordable housing. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I do not have transportation. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I feel that others treat me poorly at work or in job interviews. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

16. If you feel others are treating you poorly at work or in job interviews, please indicate why you think you are being treated poorly. (Check all that apply)

My race or ethnicity

My gender identity

My age

I have a mental or physical disability



My sexual orientation My socioeconomic status/class

Other (please specify) _____ I do not feel that I am being treated poorly.

TRANSPORTATION

17. If you have access to a vehicle, please complete the following:

17a. I share this vehicle with multiple people.

Yes No

17b. This vehicle is reliable.

Yes No

18. If you take public transportation, please complete the following:

18a. I use public transportation for most of my travel needs.

Yes No

18b. Using public transportation from my neighborhood is convenient for me.

Yes No

18c. I can easily use public transportation at all hours of the day?

Yes No

19. If public transportation does not meet your needs, please indicate which of the following issues affect you by agreeing or disagreeing with each statement. (Circle one)

It does not run in my neighborhood.

Agree

Disagree

Unsure

It does not run at times that are convenient for my job.	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
--	-------	----------	--------

It is not reliable.	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
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It requires too many bus changes.	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
-----------------------------------	-------	----------	--------

I do not feel safe.	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
---------------------	-------	----------	--------

I have a disability.	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
----------------------	-------	----------	--------

It is too expensive.	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
----------------------	-------	----------	--------

Other (please specify) _____

20. Please indicate which of the following would improve public transportation for you by agreeing or disagreeing with each statement. (Circle one)

Bus routes that connect my neighborhood to where I need to go	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
---	-------	----------	--------

More buses running at night	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
-----------------------------	-------	----------	--------

More buses running on	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
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weekends

Bus stops with covers/shelters Agree Disagree Unsure

Safer bus stops Agree Disagree Unsure

Other options besides buses Agree Disagree Unsure

More bicycle lanes Agree Disagree Unsure

Safer bicycle lanes Agree Disagree Unsure

Other (please specify) _____

LIVING WAGE

21. My current household income meets my basic needs.

Yes No Not applicable

22. My current household income allows me to save money for the future.

Yes No Not applicable

23. Which of the following would improve your current economic situation? (Check all that apply)



___Access to affordable education

___Access to affordable training/workshops

___Access to affordable childcare

___Access to affordable dependent care

___Access to affordable housing

___Other (please specify) _____

24. If education or training would improve your current economic situation, please indicate which of the following prevents you from taking part in it by agreeing or disagreeing with each statement. (Circle one)

I do not know how to find information on opportunities.

Agree

Disagree

Not Applicable

I do not have transportation to opportunities.

Agree

Disagree

Not Applicable

I do not have support from my current employer.

Agree

Disagree

Not Applicable

I do not have childcare during educational opportunities.

Agree

Disagree

Not Applicable

I do not have childcare during training opportunities.

Agree

Disagree

Not Applicable

I am not interested in participating in education or training.

Agree

Disagree

Not Applicable



I do not have the money for educational opportunities. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I do not have the money for training opportunities. Agree Disagree Not Applicable

I do not have access to technology (smart phone, computer, Internet, etc.) Agree Disagree Not Applicable

Other (please specify) _____

25. Which of the following would improve your ability to further your education through training or school?

Scholarships or grants Affordable and convenient childcare

Internet access for online classes More flexible (evening/online) programs

Other (please specify) _____

HOUSING

26. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

I own my home. I rent my home.



I stay with friends or family. I do not have housing.

27. How many people reside with you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 or more

28. How many individuals who reside with you are less than 18 years of age?

0 1 2 3 4 or more

29. What percentage of your income is spent on rent or mortgage payments?

Less than 39% 40-54% 55-84%
 85-99% 100%

30. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

I do not feel safe in my current housing situation because of the physical conditions of the structure (apartment, home, shelter, etc.) Agree Disagree

I do not feel safe in my current housing situation because of the neighborhood. Agree Disagree

I do not feel safe in my current housing situation Agree Disagree



because of individuals in my life.

I cannot find affordable housing.	Agree	Disagree
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I cannot find affordable housing that is convenient to either my job or transportation to my job.	Agree	Disagree
---	-------	----------

CHILDCARE AND DEPENDENT CARE

31. If you have one or more children, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I can find quality childcare.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
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I can afford quality childcare.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
---------------------------------	-------	----------	----------------

I can find quality, affordable childcare that fits my work schedule.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
--	-------	----------	----------------

I can find quality,	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
---------------------	-------	----------	----------------



affordable childcare that is close to my job.

Convenient transportation would improve my experience with childcare.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
---	-------	----------	----------------

Quality, affordable childcare that is available close to work would improve my experience with childcare.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
---	-------	----------	----------------

Accessible information on quality, affordable childcare programs would improve my experience with childcare.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
--	-------	----------	----------------

32. If you have at least one child, are you supposed to receive child support?

Yes No I do not have any children.

33. If you are supposed to receive child support, do you receive it regularly?

Yes No

I do not have any children or I am not supposed to receive child support.

34. If you care for an adult who is a dependent, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.



I can find quality dependent care.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
I can afford quality dependent care.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
I can find quality, affordable dependent care that fits my work schedule.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
I can find quality, affordable dependent care that is close to my job.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
Convenient transportation would improve my experience with dependent care.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
Quality, affordable dependent care that is available close to work would improve my experience with dependent care.	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
Accessible information on quality, affordable dependent care programs would improve my experience with	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable

dependent care.

Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback. Your input will help us identify areas for improvement for economic security for women and girls who reside in the Tallahassee area.



Appendix B: Fact Sheets
 Appendix B.1: CSWG Fact Sheet

The Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

In an effort to address community-wide issues facing women and girls, the Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls was formed in 2011. In 2013, the City of Tallahassee proudly joined the County to create the current Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG). The Oasis Center for Women & Girls provides staffing and administrative support for our work.

Our Mission

To promote awareness of issues pertaining to women and girls in Tallahassee and Leon County and to serve in an advisory role, providing input to the City and County Commissions as needed.

What We Do

Our 21-member body spent the first 18 months gathering data on the status of women and girls in Tallahassee and Leon County. We published a landmark report establishing the current status of women and girls locally across a variety of issues such as crime and justice, economic security, education, health, and leadership. Our second report made recommendations to improve the status of women and girls in our community. We are continuing to work with stakeholders and engage with the community in order to address issues that affect women and girls in our area.

How to Get Involved

- ✓ **Apply to join the Commission.** The CSWG commission year begins October 1st each year. Fourteen appointments are made by the City and County Commissioners and the remaining 7 appointments are made by the CSWG. For more information on the application process, please go to: <http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/join-the-commission/>
- ✓ **Volunteer** by serving on a committee as a non-voting member or helping with special events
- ✓ **Invite us to speak** about the role of the Commission in our local community

What We Have Achieved

- ✓ **2012:** Produced a landmark report on the status of women and girls in our community (<http://tallahasseeleoncswg.com/research-publications/>)
- ✓ **2013:** Summit on *Women in the Workplace*
- ✓ **2013:** Provided technical assistance which led to adoption of model policies responding to domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking in the workplace by Leon County, City of Tallahassee and Tallahassee Community College
- ✓ **2013:** Published a report detailing community-wide recommendations to improve the status of women and girls
- ✓ **2012/2013:** Served as catalyst for the creation of the Leon County Alliance for Girls
- ✓ **2012-2015:** Hosted a series of public hearings to gather citizens' feedback about concerns facing women and girls
- ✓ **2015:** Hosted a poverty simulation for community members and stakeholders
- ✓ **2015:** Released a report on the sexual violence response on our community ([#ItsOnUsTallahassee](#))
- ✓ **2015:** Worked with [StarMetro](#) to gather data to determine public transportation concerns for women and girls

For more information, please contact:

The Oasis Center for Women and Girls, 317 E. Call Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: 850-222-2747

Email: admin@tallahasseeleoncswg.com <http://www.tallahasseeleoncswg.com>



THE TALLAHASSEE/LEON COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

COMMUNITY HUMAN SERVICE PARTNERSHIP 2015 FACT SHEET

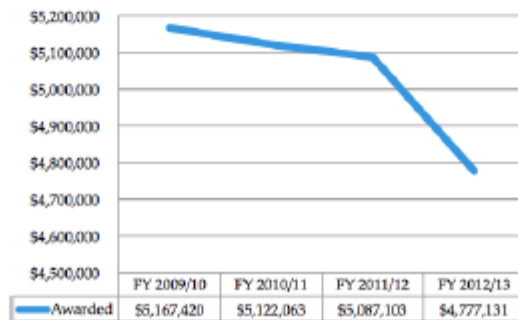
WHAT IS CHSP?

The *Community Human Service Partnership* (CHSP) is an innovative collaboration between Leon County, the City of Tallahassee, and the United Way of the Big Bend. It was established to most effectively distribute community funds for human services. CHSP was first implemented in 1997. Prior to the development of the CHSP funding distribution process, the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and the United Way conducted separate grant review processes; consequently, local human service providers had to participate in three different processes.

- Partnership assures 100 percent of CHSP funds are allocated to areas of greatest need and opportunity, directly impacting client's in most difficult social and economic conditions.
- Nonprofit human service organizations submit rigorous funding applications.
- Volunteer citizen evaluation teams review each application, assessing each agency's proposal, to ensure the highest levels of integrity and objectivity in the award process.

WHY IS CHSP IMPORTANT?	WHO BENEFITS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23.2% of Leon County residents live below the poverty line, compared to the statewide average of 16.3%. • 55% of children in school readiness programs in Leon County are eligible for free or reduced lunch. • 58% of single women with children live in poverty in Leon County. 	<p>CHSP funds a broad continuum of community need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's services • community support services • services for persons with disabilities • senior services • substance abuse services • youth recreation and character building services

WHAT'S AT STAKE?



- Not only is the level of CHSP insufficient, it is also unpredictable.
- Without sufficient and predictable funding, services across our community would be jeopardized.

CALL TO ACTION

Please ask your County or City Commissioner to increase funding for CHSP –
The health and well being of local women and girls depend on it!

County Commissioners: <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/Home/County-Commission/Meet-Your-Commissioners>

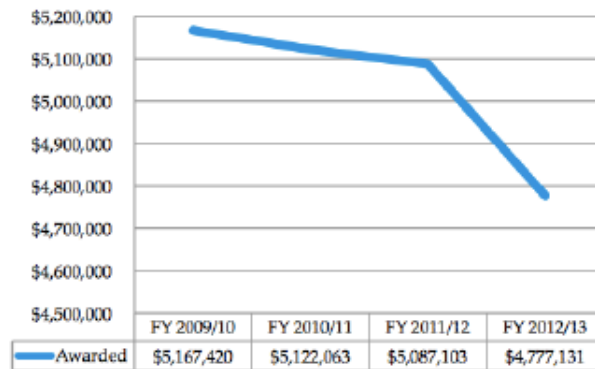
City Commissioners: <https://www.tal.gov.com/commission/commission-about.aspx>

CALL TO ACTION

For more information, you can contact the Commission's Staff Liaison at admin@tallahasseeleoncswg.com or
(850) 222-2747.

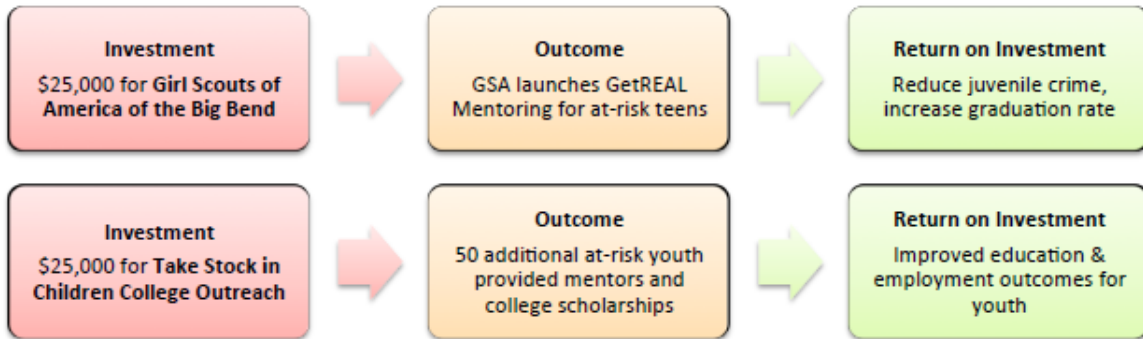
WHY CHSP MATTERS TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

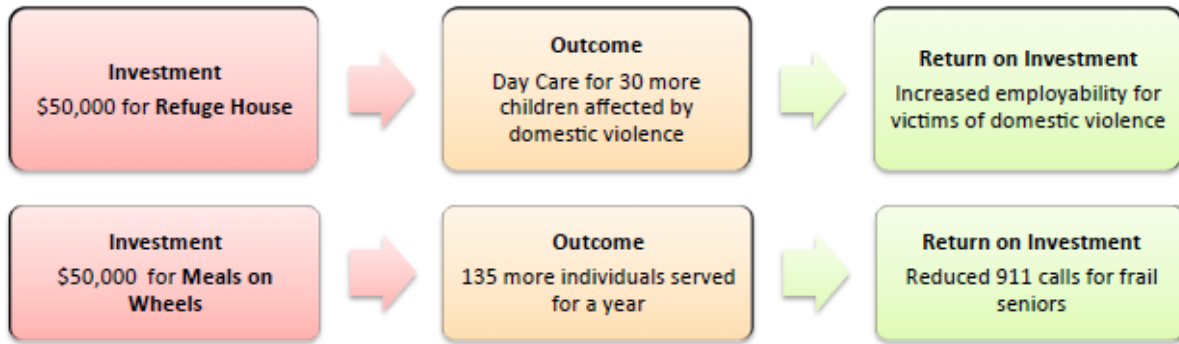
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WHAT IS THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT?

One dollar spent on CHSP can save hundreds of dollars of City and County spending on jails, subsidized housing, and other social and economic assistance programs.





CALL TO ACTION

- Funding for CHSP should be increased to align with actual community need
- Establish a minimum annual level for CHSP to ensure stability and predictability for human services providers

For more information, e-mail the Commission Chair, Jessica Lowe-Minor, chair@tallahasseeleoncswg.com, or call The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, Inc., at 850-222-2747.

Appendix B.4: Women and Entrepreneurship Fact Sheet

Entrepreneurship and Women Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls Fact Sheet	
<h3 style="color: #4a4a8a;">Current Landscape for Women in Entrepreneurship</h3> <p>Between 1997 and 2014, when the number of women-owned businesses in the United States increased by 67.8%, the number of women-owned firms in the state of Florida increased by 75%. As of 2014, United States' women entrepreneurs own 9.1 million businesses, creating the fastest growing business segment in the nation. Research shows that an <i>increase of women in business leadership positions correlates with increased business returns and payout ratios</i> (Credit Suisse, 2014). While U.S. and Florida women are highly represented in the areas of entrepreneurship and small business ownership, there are significant issues that affect women disproportionately compared to their male counterparts.</p> <p>According to the most recent Census Bureau report (2007) Leon County falls below the national and Florida average for women's representation among business owners. In that same Census year, Leon County had 7,145 female-owned businesses (31.3% of all businesses), while 52.4% were male-owned and 16.2% were equally male-/female-owned. Nearly 17% of the female-owned businesses had paid employees (Census Bureau, 2007). <i>(Updated Census data for Leon County expected to be available in 2015).</i></p>	
<h3 style="color: #4a4a8a;">Community Benefits: Economic Growth and Prosperity</h3> <p>By addressing the gender gap in entrepreneurship, Leon County and Tallahassee stakeholders can unleash a wealth of ingenuity and creativity that can spark a new era of women entrepreneur-led economic growth and prosperity in our community.</p>	
<h4 style="color: #4a4a8a;">Issues Facing Women Entrepreneurs</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Women-owned firms now account for 30% of all US enterprises, growing faster in number and employment than most. Despite this, women-owned firms have had lower sales, profits, and survival rates (American Express Open/Womenable, 2015). ✓ Women entrepreneurs need more business training resources, and mentoring to survive and grow (Bishop, 2013; Kim, 2015; Laukhuf & Malone, 2015). ✓ Women face gender bias as entrepreneurs, making it harder to secure funding (Thébaud, 2015; Tinkler, et al., 2015). ✓ Women business owners have lower earnings than male business owners, making it more difficult for female caregivers to support their families (Marshall & Flaig, 2015). ✓ Research shows that self-employed people experience greater stress than those employed by others. Women are typically the sole owner of their business, which has negative implications for their overall health and stress levels (Cardon & Patel, 2015). ✓ Professional identity as an entrepreneur needs to be supported by networking and interacting with role models (Kim, 2015). 	<h4 style="color: #4a4a8a;">Special Considerations Needed</h4> <p>Research provides insight for improving women's chances of successfully starting and maintaining their small businesses or entrepreneurial ventures.</p> <p>Addressing these considerations is important to meet the issues facing women entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Examples of considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access to a diverse mentoring team of experts in public relations, marketing, funding, strategic planning, and leadership ✓ Opportunities to learn essential business skills ✓ Psychosocial support through networking and relationship-building experiences ✓ Advice on health, work, and family life balance ✓ Exposure to successful women entrepreneurs ✓ Education regarding best financial practices and strategic planning ✓ Connection to funding sources
<p>For information about the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls contact: The Oasis Center for Women and Girls, 317 E. Call Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301 Phone: 850-222-2747 Email: admin@tallahasseeleoncswo.com www.tallahasseeleoncswo.com Like us on Facebook!</p>	



Appendix C: Copy of StarMetro Survey

What Can StarMetro Do for You?

StarMetro is collecting demographic data on its riders in an effort to improve its services to all members of the community. Your responses will help StarMetro to serve all areas of Leon County. Please provide the following items:

1. What is your home zip code?

2. What is your gender? (Circle One)

Male

Female

Transgender

Would Rather Not
Say

3. Which of the following best describes your use of StarMetro? (Check One)

___ StarMetro is my only source of transportation. [If checked, go to question 4.]

___ I use StarMetro for most of my transportation. [If checked, go to question 4.]

___ I use StarMetro for half of my transportation. [If checked, go to question 4.]

___ I rarely use StarMetro. [If checked, go to question 7.]

___ I never use Star Metro. [If checked, go to question 7.]

4. How do you use StarMetro? Check all that apply.

- To get to my job
- To get to my own K-12 school
- To get to my college or university
- To take my child (children) to school or activities
- To take my dependent (older child or adult) to activities or programs
- Other (Please specify) _____

5. Which route(s) do you use to access the above activities you selected?

**6. Does StarMetro meet your needs in accessing the above activities you selected?
(Circle One)**

Yes


No

7. Based on the uses of StarMetro that you mentioned above, what specific improvement would you like to see made to the StarMetro system? (Please provide specific information such as route names, safety concerns, and/or times to better address the issue.)

Appendix D: Public Hearing Flyers

Appendix D.1: Flyer for Public Hearings 1-3

The Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
is holding
Public Hearings on Financial Concerns Experienced by
Women and Girls



About the Public Hearings

The focus of the 2014-2015 Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is “building bridges to economic security” for women and girls in our community. The Commission has identified housing, transportation, childcare, and income to be several of the factors that impact economic security.

We welcome you to participate in public hearings to share your input on women’s economic security in your community and the upcoming initiatives of the Commission.

Refreshments will be served. Children are welcome to attend.

Visit <http://www.theoasiscenter.net/2.html> to learn more about the Commission and to download their 2012 and 2013-2014 Reports. If you do not have Internet access, you can obtain a copy of the report by contacting the Staff Liaison.

Tuesday, September 16 – 6 p.m.

Woodville Community Center
8000 Old Woodville Rd.

Thursday, October 2 - 6 p.m.

Jack McLean Community Center
700 Paul Russell Rd.

Monday, October 6 - 12 p.m.

LeRoy Collins Main Library
200 W. Park Ave.

For more information, contact the Commission’s Staff Liaison:

Lisa Langenderfer-Magruder

lisa.oasis@comcast.net

(850) 222-2747



The Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of
Women and Girls
is holding a
Community Conversation on Financial Concerns
Experienced by Women and Girls



About the Conversation

The focus of the 2014-2015 Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is “building bridges to economic security” for women and girls in our community. The Commission has identified housing, transportation, childcare, and income to be several of the factors that impact economic security.

We welcome you to participate in the conversation to share your input on women’s economic security in your community and the upcoming initiatives of the Commission.

Visit <http://www.theoasiscenter.net/2.html> to learn more about the Commission and to download their 2012 and 2013-2014 Reports. If you do not have Internet access, you can obtain a copy of the report by contacting the Staff Liaison.

Monday, November 24 - 11 a.m.
Tallahassee Senior Center
1400 N. Monroe St.

Refreshments will be served.
Children are welcome to attend.

For more information, contact the
Commission’s Staff Liaison:
Lisa Langenderfer-Magruder
lisa.oasis@comcast.net
(850) 222-2747



Appendix E: Public Hearing Summary Document

Financial Concerns Faced by Women and Girls: A Summary of Community Conversations

Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls | December 2014

Introduction

In the Fall of 2014, the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) hosted a series of public conversations with community members from various parts of Leon County. Conversations took place at the Woodville Community Center, the Jack McLean Community Center, the LeRoy Collins Main Library, and the Tallahassee Senior Center. Through small group conversations, Commissioners were able to hear the voices of women in our community regarding their financial concerns. The CSWG has summarized the findings of these conversations and highlighted the top concerns discussed at these events. This is, of course, not an exhaustive list of the numerous economic challenges women face, but it does represent many of the top concerns of expressed by those who attended the community conversations.

Participants

In addition to CSWG Commissioners, The Oasis Center for Women & Girls staff, and notetakers, over 50 attendees participated in at least one of the community conversations. Attendees represented a diverse range of citizens, the overwhelming majority of whom are women.

The first public hearing, held at the Woodville Community Center, was structured differently than the latter three community conversations. With only four community participants in Woodville, the CSWG hosted one conversation among all Commissioners and attendees. Based on feedback received from those participants, Commissioners restructured the remaining public hearings to be small group conversations. This strategy proved beneficial as the remaining three conversations were well attended and the small group format provided attendees more opportunity to voice their experiences and concerns regarding economic security.

Disparities in Leon County/Tallahassee

Before exploring the financial concerns facing women and girls in our community, it is important to note that many attendees discussed the great economic diversity within our community. Attendees noted that there is economic insecurity in “pockets” of the community and that economic situations are very diverse depending on the geographic location within Leon County. While several participants cited economic inequality of the sexes, many more discussed the associations between racism, classism, and poverty. Moreover, a lack of visibility of women of color was noted. Knowing that financial concerns may differ by not only geographic location, but individual circumstance, the following are common concerns shared by women in four areas of Leon County.



What is *Economic Security*?

Prior to discussing the specific financial concerns experienced by women and girls in the community, Commissioners asked attendees to share what they associate with the term “economic security.” Some spoke about societal issues such as the “feminization of poverty” and equal pay, though most spoke about what entails economic security. Specifics include the ability to meet one’s basic needs, childcare, savings in case of emergency, and access to resources. The following is a list of some of the responses of attendees:

- “Financial stability”
- “Hope and prospects”
- Ability to “support themselves”
- “Being able to meet basic needs, have reliable childcare, and accumulate savings”
- “Not just getting by, but also having a safety net in the form of savings”
- “Being able to have resources”
- “Ability to be empowered with finances or knowledge to become financially secure”
- “Pay for your choice of lifestyle”
- “Affordable childcare”
- “Reliable employment, transportation to employment, and being financially secure”
- “Resources available in time of need”
- “The ability to have movement in life...and having enough money to get out of a hole.”
- “Being able to manage your household with whatever income you make and family it is comprised of”
- “The ability to have aspirations”
- “Being able to have security beyond just the paycheck to paycheck”
- “...includes health. Basic health.”
- “It’s not just food. It’s ability to afford quality food.”
- “Having networks to fill the gaps”
- “Having the education that you need to be successful, having the stash to be financially secure, having financial independence beyond just your most basic needs”
- “Having enough money to live on and having something on the side to live with and enjoy”
- “Housing, first and foremost. Everything else is secondary.”
- “That we have enough money and finances to take care of ourselves”

Regardless of what encompasses economic security, it is clear from what the attendees shared that financial concerns are woven throughout women’s lives. In the words of one attendee, “Economic stability is an umbrella over all. Economic stability affects every area of life.”

Economic Concerns Faced by Women and Girls in Our Community

Economic Uncertainty Throughout the Lifespan

From K-12 education to retirement, concerns related to economic security are apparent throughout the lifespan for local women, particularly during times of role transition. Women in our community shared their concerns outlined below.

K-12 Education: Issues Facing Girls

Disparities in Education. Several attendees shared that education, and disparities in education in particular, was their top economic concern. Women shared personal stories of racial and gender discrimination in education that highlighted the diversity in educational experiences in K-12, including “favoritism for certain students.” Disparities are system-wide according to Lashawn Gordon, Program Director at PACE Center for Girls, who stated, “There are ‘privileged’ and ‘non-privileged’ areas, and students in more ‘privileged’ areas get more access to resources. You have poor schools, middle-class schools, and schools that have more.” Community members appear to concur that education is likely affecting our youth disproportionately. One attendee shared that, in a study she helped to conduct, “99% of girls expelled from public school are Black.”

Other individuals talked about how important education is to alleviating poverty and how a lack of education can lead to economic uncertainty. One woman said, “Many women are uneducated and have a lot of barriers. It closes a lot of doors, and the ‘closed doors’ can persist for years.” The intersection of race, class, and gender as it impacts the educational and, eventually employment, paths of girls is highlighted by Kelly Otte, Executive Director of PACE Center for Girls:

Racism leads to poverty, which leads to hopelessness, which influences behavior. These girls suffer from institutionalized helplessness...[PACE] help[s] them break out of this mindset, but the doors that open tend to be in fast food, childcare, nursing (as CNAs), and other really low paying jobs.

Lack of Programming for Girls. Girls may be particularly at risk for falling behind in education and extracurricular activities due to lack of programming specific to girls. One participant described programs as “boy-centered with girls invited.” As it turns out, sometimes girls are not invited. One woman shared her story:

In the case of my grandchildren, there was a [religious denomination] program, but they only offered programs for boys, so my granddaughter didn’t have a place to go. My grandson got to go two to three times per week, and it helped him a lot, but my granddaughter didn’t have anything. There was nothing regular that she could attend.

Even when programming is available, such as extracurricular activities, some parents and guardians cannot accommodate their girl’s participation. “[Parents] also can’t get to school, so schools label them as uncaring. [Girls] can’t do extracurricular activities because of [their parents’ or guardians’] jobs.” Another participant stated that, through her work in rural areas of the Florida panhandle, she has found that “families cannot put their daughters in Girl Scouts because they don’t have enough money for food or gas.” One participant summarized the issue by saying, “Right now, girls are falling through the cracks.”

Lack of Discussion About Various Post-High School Options. Attendees also shared their concern that high school students who do not plan to attend to college are not exposed to other career opportunities. One attendee stated, “We emphasize college so much. But young people who don’t go to college, for whatever reason, can still get employed in some places. More staff help is needed in many places.” Another attendee echoed this, saying, “In high school, they seem to only talk to students about the opportunities when you go to college, not if you aren’t going to college.” Kendra Moore, Director of the Palmer Munroe Teen Center, shared what she sees in her work with young women, stating, “Female teenagers between the ages of 17 and 21 in the transition period are trying to figure out the next part of their lives. Finding a job is an issue, and even more for teen parents.” She went on to share:

One young lady, who is 18, who is not in school, is having great difficulty getting housing and services. But if she had a child, she would qualify for many more services. How do you live off the money she makes currently in a part-time job?

From the Classroom to the Workplace: Transitioning after College Graduation

Student Loan Debt. As previously noted, the Leon County community is quite diverse and college campuses are no different. Many college students and recent college graduates discussed the continuum of economic insecurity to security seen in the student population, with some students relying on familial financial support and others on full-time jobs to pay for their education. Still others rely on student loans, which was indicated as a top economic concern for many students and recent graduates. Sentiments of “worry” and “fear” were shared when discussing the need to soon begin repayment on loans. One student described being “buried under piles of student debt” while another shared they are “going to have to take out a loan to pay student loans.” One college graduate describes her educational regret:

I had to start working immediately at age 18. I wasn’t eligible for Pell grants at first, so I racked up a lot of debt to get my education, and still wasn’t able to support myself. I regret getting my education because of the debt. It wasn’t worth it.

Fear of Limited Employment Prospects. In addition to student loans, attendees shared anticipated or experienced difficulties in obtaining employment after graduation. One master’s program graduate shared her frustration that internships and volunteer work do not count as experience necessary for many positions. She states, “It’s a catch-22. Employers want two plus years of specific experience in a specific field along with a master’s. How do they expect you to do both?” Another participant shared:

The cost of education is so high. When I lived in Orlando, people were having the hardest time finding jobs after they actually graduate[d]. They had to pick up minimum wage jobs at theme parks. I can only imagine the same thing happens in Tallahassee. I’m lucky enough to be hired at my internship, but I don’t know how often that happens for people.

“The Plight of the Single Woman is Sometimes Forgotten”



Many women who have neither a partner nor a child shared their feelings of being “forgotten.” The majority of attendees who shared these concerns expressed that there is a lack of resources for single women without children and that there is no incentive for *not* having children. In the words of one participant:

I don't have children so [I] can't qualify for Medicaid. Only way you can get it is for [a] twelve- month period when you are pregnant. I won't be able to afford market price health insurance. I cannot imagine not having insurance.

Another participant shared similar concerns for working women who do not have children:

They fall into a doughnut hole and become very financially insecure as a result. They can't find decent housing and can't afford reliable transportation. They don't have family to support them and no firm support from a particular source.

Others spoke about their dependency on partners for economic security, which will be discussed more comprehensively later. However, one woman shared that following the ending of a relationship she “wasn't ready for the bill of being single.”

Balancing Motherhood and Work

Planning Ahead for Problems. When it comes to motherhood, though several participants noted the effects teenage or unplanned pregnancies and single motherhood could have on a woman's economic security, most attendees spoke about the barriers women face in employment after becoming a mother. However, prior to even having children, women are worrying about their workplace maternity leave policies. One attendee said, “Everyone in my family assumes I'll get married. How will having a child affect my career? Will it prevent me from getting promoted at my job?” Another attendee shared:

I'm thinking about the future in regards to my career, and if I have a family, taking off leave. There's also the obligations of pregnancy, and whether that will affect my job security. There are laws to protect me, but the careers I aspire to might still be harmed if I have a family.”

Maternity Leave and the “Mommy Track.” Unfortunately, it does not appear that these worries are unfounded. Other women spoke about inadequate maternity leave policies. One attendee was interested to know how maternity policies differ by organization, particularly when organizations are made up of predominantly women. She states, “There are different gender-based jobs, and it would be interesting to see if they treat the issue of maternity differently. Do ‘women's jobs’ treat that differently?”

Following any leave, mothers continue to struggle as they return to the workplace, with many attendees sharing that they feel there is a burden on mothers in the workplace. One attendee shared that, when many moms return to work they feel “mom guilt.” Beyond the guilt, other attendees discussed the phenomenon of “mommy track[ing].” Commissioner R. Jai Gillum shared

that a woman she knows had to drop down to part time work at her workplace because she was on the “mommy track.” One participant shared that she believes there is a prejudice against women, stating that organizational leaders often think, “Why should we invest and train them when women are just going to get married and leave the organization to have a baby?” Another participant discussed a dichotomy of agency culture experiences with the birth of her two children while employed in two different settings:

My husband and I used to work at the same company. For the first child, I could use maternity leave, but my husband was not allowed to get paternity leave. This is discriminatory. He could still use family medical leave, but could not be paid. I could use accrued paid sick leave. How is this legal if we are both covered by the Family Medical Leave Act? In my current position, there is strong female leadership. This is great for the culture of the company, and well-rounded. I never dealt with personal discrimination for being pregnant; instead, it was celebrated.

Some women choose to leave the workforce to take care of their children for reasons other than financial ones, though returning to the workforce after a period of time presents new challenges:

I chose not to work and chose to stay home with my kids. I didn’t want anyone else to raise them. When my husband passed away, I had no childcare, but I couldn’t afford to not go back to work. It took me two years to get back into the labor force.

Ultimately, it appears from these participants’ stories that there needs to be a cultural shift in how we view and accommodate the needs of working mothers, and working parents generally.

Specific Needs of Older Adult Women

Transitioning into Retirement. Even women who put in a lifetime of work face economic insecurity, particularly as they reach the age in which many retire. Several participants shared their concerns about having enough money to get through retirement. Commissioner Gail Dixon shared that she had concerns about whether or not she could retire because her job did not have a pension plan. Additionally, she was too young to receive Medicare, so she would have to purchase private health insurance. A community member shared similar concerns, asking, “Will I be able to stay in my home on a fixed income because I am retired?” Still another attendee, a non-profit employee, shared her concern about the lack of retirement provisions through her employment. This would indicate that older adult women must have a certain amount of financial savings and assets if they want to retire. Without savings, federal retirement benefits may not be enough for many older adults to live on in retirement. Commissioner Ruth Nickens, who works with older adults at the Tallahassee Senior Center, spoke to what she sees in her clients’ lives, stating, “Social Security is not a living wage.”

Not unlike the “plight of the single woman” that many younger participants spoke to, many older adult women who do not have a partner face economic insecurity and a lack of adequate resources. One participant shared her story of her divorce as it related to Social Security:

If you were married and then divorced, your income is affected by that. Being a government employee, I couldn't even pay into Social Security. I had to pay into my own private retirement plan. Federal employees couldn't pay into Social Security until the 1980s. When I divorced, I couldn't get anything of my ex-husbands. I had to rely on myself.

For those older adult women who are interested in remaining in the workforce, options for employment can be limited. Job prospects are further reduced when technological barriers are in place. For example, Verna Brock, who assists library patrons at the Woodville library branch, notes that though many individuals who come to the library to use the computers have difficulty filling out online forms, older adults seem to have the greatest difficulty.

Housing Concerns of Older Adult Women. Though a need for more affordable housing options for seniors was mentioned, the primary concern expressed by older adult women is for nursing homes, and the cost and quality of nursing home care in particular. According to one attendee:

We are basically making older people homeless. Many people do not have family members to take care of them and, if they do, that is a big hardship for the family members. Medicare doesn't cover assisted living and nursing homes. I know that there is a process where you can try and get a room and then apply for Medicaid, but not everyone gets that.

This same participant went on to say, "Nursing homes are profit-seeking. They aren't concerned with the actual people who need to live there." Another participant shared her mother's experience in a nursing home facility:

...Before she died, she wanted to get out [of the skilled nursing facility] so badly because she wasn't being treated well in the facility. She begged and pleaded with me to take her home. She would have rather died at home instead of in the nursing home. Luckily, I was able to retire and take care of her.

Commissioner Dr. Ada Puryear Burnette shared that although upon first look things may seem "fine" in nursing home facilities, "there is a need to [have] better criteria for these facilities [and] the agencies that review them and certify them should be more strict." Another participant agreed, stating, "I think it is important that we have more frequent, unannounced visits to nursing homes and assisted living [facilities]."

Making Sacrifices to Make It Work

Regardless of which point in the lifespan girls and women are at, they often face difficult choices in order to provide for themselves and their families.

Obtaining an Education Alongside the Demands of Life



Many attendees spoke about difficult choices they have to make when trying to obtain an education due to competing demands. For example, one participant shared the personal sacrifices she made to put herself through school, saying, “I don’t think there was any way to get to where I am except by hard work. I did a lot of manual labor, lived in slums, lived where people sell crack, and lived in my car.” Still another student shared how she is sacrificing her preferred career path due to economic constraints:

Everyone is steering me towards a path that I do not necessarily want to pursue.
Now I am scared to do what I actually want to do. I cannot afford to do what I want to do because of student loans.

Attendees also shared the difficulty of balancing schoolwork and employment, with one attendee simply stating, “Schoolwork suffers when you work jobs while at school.” In some instances, employers are not supportive attending school while working. In the words of one attendee:

I wanted to take time off to take a school test, but my boss said I was wasting my time and that I couldn’t take this time off. My professor called my supervisor and I ended up taking the test and passed it. I wanted to move up the ladder.

Working Mothers and Caregivers: When the Paycheck Does Not Cover the Care

Many mothers and caregivers spoke about having to decide whether to stay in the workplace or stay at home with their child or adult dependent loved one. Mothers discussed the benefits and drawbacks of staying home to care for their children, noting that often times it is more cost effective to stay at home given the high costs of childcare. In fact, many attendees specifically discussed a need for both more and more affordable childcare options. Commissioner R. Jai Gillum shared that she knows many women who have had to quit their jobs until their children go to school because entire paychecks would have to be used to cover the cost of daycare if they went back to work. Still others spoke about women who rely on welfare because it provides more than a paycheck provides. One attendee shared that a woman known to her “was just offered a job, but couldn’t afford to put her kids in daycare because she wasn’t going to make more at the job than she would off of her welfare check.” Another participant shared, “[Families] already have so much to provide for [and] in making these kinds of tradeoffs, you have to make hard decisions.” She goes on to discuss how women more often than men give up their professional role to provide childcare:

What if she is more qualified in her work field? It is sad to see her ambition die. It is hard to get back to a place where you were prior to becoming a mom. [It’s] sad to see women who are qualified and have drive not be able to pursue careers.

Those providing care to adults, such as a parent, had similar concerns as mothers, particularly when it comes to the cost of care. In the words of one participant, “With the income my mother was getting through my [deceased] father’s social security, [it] wasn’t enough for us to pursue additional resources.” Like many working mothers, the cost of adult day care is so high that many adult dependent caregivers choose to leave their jobs and provide the care themselves. One participant stated, “What do you do when your mother is ill and you have to take care of her? Home health care

is very expensive. For any woman that has to take care of someone else, what do you do?" Another participant shared:

People have to give up their careers related to Alzheimer's, for example, because they cannot afford nursing homes or home health care. It is more cost effective for them to stay home. It is unfortunate that it happens, but it does happen a lot with children and with elders.

Another woman shared a similar story:

My mother is living with me and she has Alzheimer's. She did not save for retirement. I'm looking at having to put her in residential care due to her declining health, but it costs \$4,000 a month. There's a waitlist of three to five years for Medicare beds in Tallahassee.

Depending on Others for Security

Many attendees discussed having to sacrifice their independence in some way to remain economically secure, most often depending on parents or a partner, and in the case of some older adults, depending on younger relatives. In regard to dependence on parents, one current student simply stated, "I still need my parents to help me financially." Another student shared her concern over remaining dependent, saying, "My parents are helping me now when I need them, but when I graduate, will I be able to support myself? My friends have this concern too." This type of dependence does not just affect the dependent individual. In the words of one participant, "Helping your child through college while you are financially struggling can really have an impact, because you lose the opportunity to recover from your child-raising years."

More often than dependence on parents, participants spoke about dependence on a partner. One attendee shared her personal story of returning to a (nonviolent) partner so that her daughter could go to a better school; the attendee could not independently afford to live in the neighborhood where the school was located. Another attendee shared that her worry over economic security influences her decision-making when it comes to choosing a partner:

I look for someone who can provide me with security, [a] back-up plan. I need a safety net. [It] makes it hard for me to make personal and professional decisions because I am not sure that I can support myself.

Conversely, one woman spoke plainly about wanting to have security beyond a relationship, stating, "[Women] want to be economically secure, and to make sure that in the event of a divorce or a break up, we as women want to make sure that our needs are being met."

Still another woman, a widow, shared how her husband's life insurance policy provided economic security for her and her family, "I have four children and my husband died five years ago. He had life insurance; if he hadn't, my life would have been different."

Opportunities and Income: Other Issues Faced by Women in the Workplace



Lack of Jobs

As previously noted, many participants cited the need for more and better job opportunities and more on the job training. This is something that attendees in all stages of life face. One young woman spoke about a friend's experience finding employment after college in the engineering field:

[She]...is coming close to running out of money and has to take a lower-level job to earn money. She grew accustomed to having all-male classes and she expected some difficulty in getting placed in her field.

Others shared that "there aren't many opportunities" and that the community "need[s] more industry, more private sector business" to provide job options. Even women who are highly educated have limited options, as one participant, who holds a Ph.D., shares, "As an African American female, there aren't enough high paying jobs for my degree."

Inadequate Income

Many participants shared that they believe their income to be inadequate, particularly in comparison to men. One participant referring to the wage gap stated, "[Women] still make less than men. It's still the economic truth." Another participant shared her personal experience of wage inequality; despite having more extensive education and experience, as well as serving significantly more clients, she was paid \$20,000 less than her male successor.

Other women spoke about inadequate income more generally. One attendee shared that many state workers must take on additional jobs to earn an adequate living:

Most of my co-workers have to work more than one job to supplement where my state job does not allow me to cover my lifestyle, and I had to pick up additional jobs in order to make ends meet.

Another shared her disappointment in raises:

...if the cost of living goes up 10%, I will only get a raise of 3%. Although I've started getting annual raises since 2008, these raises get smaller every year. Even though my income goes up, I get poorer every year as the cost of living goes up."

Inequality in Leadership

In addition to the wage gap, attendees noted that there is inequality among the sexes in leadership, particularly when it comes to supervisory positions. One attendee shared, "In some agencies, many of the employees are female, but the supervisors are male." A student shared her concern of hitting the "glass ceiling" and worries about the upward mobility of her career. Specifically, she is concerned that "most of administrative staff at agencies are dominantly male." One attendee wants girls today to see a different picture than she saw, saying, "Young girls don't see enough women

leaders in the room, so having more women at the top will help younger women. We had to learn to adapt to a male-dominated workspace.”

Racial Discrimination

In the words of one participant, “We live in an area that doesn’t want to talk about race or poverty issues.” Commissioner R. Jai Gillum shared that “minorities typically have lower levels of education and fewer skills for jobs.” Another attendee shared specific racial and gender-based discrimination in hiring, stating, “At [restaurant chain], they have health insurance and better wages, but they hire mostly White employees. If they pay well, they don’t hire Black women.” Still another attendee, who shared her job-seeking struggles as a highly educated, African American woman, said, “Most organizations don’t need to hire more minorities.”

Even for women who are entrepreneurs, racism may impact business. One attendee spoke about racism in this context: “In Tallahassee, [racism is] definitely there. Being a business owner and being in those circles. It can be having a conversation, but you are not invited to the table.”

Recommendations

Given the predominant themes that emerged over the course of the community conversations, recommendations are presented for consideration.

Provide Mentorship to Girls and Women Across the Lifespan

Many attendees discussed the idea of promoting mentorship and role models, particularly showing girls that there are women in power. In the words of attendees:

- “Younger women need to be mentored, and they need the training to develop and be trained for future positions. Younger professional women can do a good job in the workplaces as well.”
- “Women who have been there, done that. I need support.”
- “We also need to have women in positions of power to whom other women can relate.”
- “We would have role models, and wouldn’t see these horrible conditions.”
- “People need a person that they could relate to. Seeing somebody that has gotten out of their struggles. You can’t come out [to] my house and talking about sending my kids to college when I am trying to figure out how to put food on the table tonight.”

Promote Accessibility of Information for Community Members

Attendees spoke of the need for better awareness of what resources already exist for a variety of needs (e.g., transportation, childcare, benefits). In addition, accessibility should be thoughtful and not make assumptions that all members of the community have access to the same means of communication (e.g., Internet). In the words of attendees:

- “Accessibility is key.”

- “How in the world do you find out about state programs for anything?...The community needs to do a better job of getting information out there to the community in a way that is not a flyer or e-mail that you may disregard.”
- “How do you apply for them? A lot of people trying to apply to services may not have Wi-Fi or Internet, not everybody knows about it.”
- In regard to entitlement of Social Security benefits following divorce: “If you are married ten years, I think you can get at least half of the spouse’s social security...Problem is some people don’t know this information so they don’t look into it.”

Increase Transportation Options

Attendees shared a variety of concerns related to transportation, with one participant stating, “No car, no go...You have to have a car in Tallahassee.” Buses were described as “unreliable” with the system having insufficient routes. One student shared that there is a lack of buses for students who live far from campus, leading to feeling unsafe when trying to return home at night. Discussion over transportation as it relates to childcare was particularly salient. Attendees noted that, for working parents who take the bus, they must make multiple stops to drop kids off and get to work. In addition, one attendee shared that most daycare is not on bus routes. A social worker shared, “I have a client who wakes up at 4:30 a.m. just to ride the bus to get her young boy to school on time. Luckily, there is a bus line close to where they live.” In the case of older adults, one woman said that, because she no longer has her driver’s license, she must rely on family to either take her to the grocery store or do her grocery shopping for her. At the Woodville conversation, a specific recommendation was made to provide a bus route to Woodville. In the words of participants:

- “It can take three hours for a person to get to work” using the bus system
- “If a woman can’t afford to pay for gas to drive a car, the time and inconvenience trade-offs you have to make to ride the bus are huge and really more expensive.”
- Offer “a summer bus program for K-12”
- “We should talk more about how we can get more students and young people to ride the bus.”
- “Transportation in Tallahassee sucks. It is too decentralized. It takes people twice as long to get to places. When all of the buses came to one spot it was better. You have to budget more time to get to places that are closer.”
- “I have noticed that bus stops used to have covers, but they don't have them now.”

Increase Affordable Childcare Options

Many attendees shared that the high cost of childcare is, at best, challenging, and, at worst, prohibitive. Some women spend entire paychecks on childcare, while others are forced to leave their job because they cannot afford it. In the words of participants:

- “Childcare close to home is impossible. I live in Wakulla County and work in Tallahassee, and there is nothing convenient for my schedule or location.”
- “I’m paying for childcare for two children, which is very expensive.”
- Commissioner Gillum: “My mother-in-law moved here, which is good, because otherwise my entire paycheck would have gone to pay for my babies.”

Provide Support For Women Caregivers

Whether talking about mothers or women taking care of adult dependents, community members would like to see more support for caregivers. Specifically, community members would like to see creative interventions to address changing employers’ minds about the “motherhood penalty.” Attendees also spoke about the need to provide general support for those taking care of aging parents as well as grandparents helping to raise their grandchildren. One participant suggested the school system incorporate “showing the children how to be caretakers” into curriculum.

Provide Support to Women Seeking Work, Including Entrepreneurs

Several participants spoke about the need to support women who are seeking work, including those who wish to be entrepreneurs, in all stages of life. In the words of one participant, “[We] need more community resources regarding how to get a job and interview preparation. [We] need to help move people out of low-income situations.”

One recommendation made was to **provide young women with information about multiple post-high school paths**. In the words of one participant, “Going into high schools and speaking to students about their job opportunities if they don’t go into the military or college would help.” Another participant shared, “There are other types of education out there that people need to access to, [such as] trade schools.” A similar point was made by another participant who stated, “...sometimes going to college does not help since they are still working in low-income jobs.”

Another recommendation made was to **engage in microlending for women entrepreneurs**. In the words of one participant, “I’d like to see microlending, training, and entrepreneurship programs, to help women open self-sustaining, financially secure small businesses. I’d like to see these programs working with women to be successful and giving them startup money.” A group of students spoke about implementing a microlending program that includes an educational component.

Several community members discussed **incentivizing employers to pay living wages**. Specifically, one attendee stated, “It would be cool if Tallahassee gave incentives for employers to offer living wages.”

Another recommendation made was to **host technology workshops** to teach and assist senior citizens and other community members in filling out online forms, such as job applications. This need was noted for all populations, but Woodville in particular is in need of computer literacy assistance.

A final recommendation is to **educate employers about hiring older adult women** who want or need to work.

Additional Concerns

In addition to the aforementioned recommendations, community members had other specific concerns:

- Girls are in need of programs about character building and self-esteem.
- Woodville does not have a Health Department Office.
- A Senior Citizen living facility is needed in Woodville.
- A support group for older women returning to college is needed.
- Older adults need more protection from financial scams.
- Individuals need education on budgeting and financial planning for the future.
- Women of color need to be more visible in publications.
- More women in leadership positions are needed.
- Women need a resource list that they can reference if they want to go back to school.
- Shortened workweeks for those who need or prefer flexibility and can still accomplish their weekly work in the shortened time period should be considered.
- Affordable, higher quality housing is needed in desirable locations (e.g., close to transportation, work)

Overarching Concepts and Broad Recommendations

- The people need to be mobilized to make change.
- Grassroots efforts may be effective.
- Women without children are being financially penalized.
- Healthcare costs are too high.
- Some older adult women expressed concern over neighborhood safety.
- Work is needed to fight racism and classism in education and employment.
- Women in the community need more and better job opportunities, particularly ones that match their skill sets.
- The community needs to work together to fight ageism.
- Avoid gathering data in a patriarchal manner.

Summary

Those who participated in these community conversations had much to share with the CSWG regarding the financial concerns experienced by women and girls. One common recommendation that came out of these conversations was for the CSWG to **continue to host community conversations, either in small groups or one-on-one with community members.**

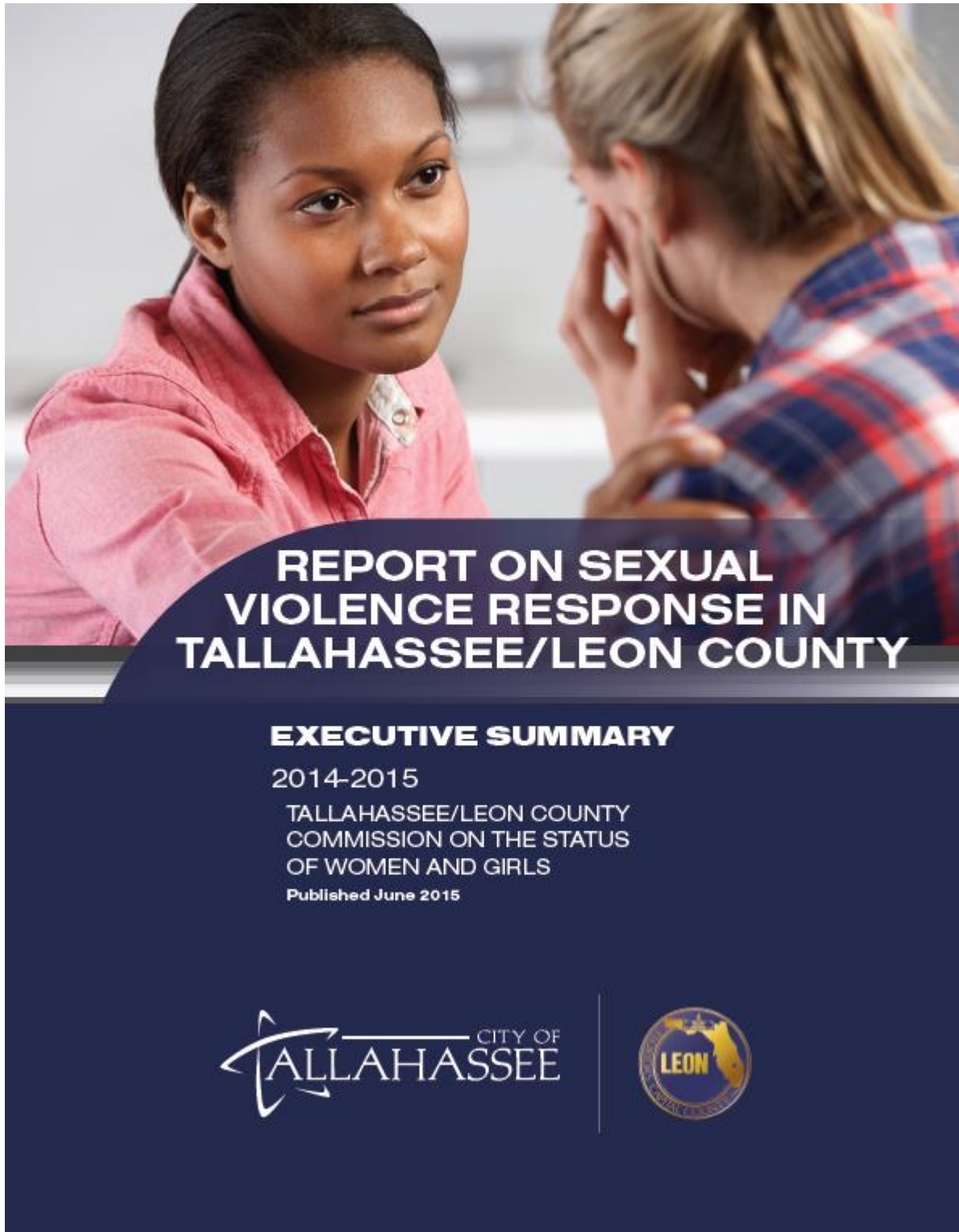
Acknowledgements

The CSWG would like to acknowledge the numerous individuals who contributed to the success of these community conversations. First, the CSWG would like to thank the staffs at the Woodville



Community Center, the Jack McLean Community Center, the LeRoy Collins Main Library, and the Tallahassee Senior Center for providing space to hold these conversations as well as their valuable time and effort in preparing each space. Second, the CSWG would like to thank the graduate students who served as notetakers, capturing the numerous stories shared by participants: Jasmine Armstrong, Cynthia E. Hanifin, Suzanne Hodgkins, Ashley Schermerhorn, and Sarah Young. Finally, the CSWG would like to thank all of the citizens who participated in these community conversations for sharing their stories in an effort to better economic security for all women and girls in our community.





Executive Summary

The statistics are staggering. Nearly 1 in 5 American women will be a victim of rape in her lifetime.¹ Forty-four percent of victims are under the age of 18, and 80% are under the age of 30.² In the vast majority of assaults (four out of five), the perpetrator is someone who was known to the victim, and yet 68% of rapes are never reported to law enforcement and it is estimated that only 2% of rapists ever spend a day in jail.³

Over the last few years, there has been an increased awareness about the prevalence of sexual violence in the United States and, in particular, on college campuses. A lot of media attention has been focused on institutions' responses to allegations, highlighting the need for policies and procedures that will support victims who come forward, rather than dissuade them.

Due to its large student population, as well as its status as a capital city, Tallahassee has attracted widespread scrutiny for its handling of sexual violence. Several high-profile cases generated heated debate and, in May of 2014, it became clear to the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) that a comprehensive overview of the community's response to sexual violence was necessary.

This report represents a year-long effort by the CSWG's Sexual Assault Policy Group (SAPG) to: (1) conduct fact-finding to determine what local policies, procedures, and services related to sexual assault were currently in place; (2) determine what models are considered national "best practices"; and (3) develop recommendations that would assist the community in improving its response and prevention efforts.

To assist in this task, the SAPG consulted with over 50 stakeholders and community members, who helped collect data and verify findings. The SAPG organized its work into six major areas: prevention, medical care, follow-up, school and workplace response, investigation and prosecution, and inter-agency collaboration.

While the CSWG's report reveals that there is much that we can do as a community to improve services to victims and hold perpetrators accountable, there have been several institutional advancements in the past year that are worth mentioning. The Tallahassee Community College (TCC) Police Department has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Refuge House to formalize a collaborative relationship. Florida State University (FSU) has created a full-time Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator position and established the kNow MORE Sexual Violence Prevention Campaign. Florida A&M University's Division of Student Affairs implemented a new sexual misconduct policy as part of the Student Code of Conduct. The Tallahassee Police Department (TPD) has partnered with End Violence Against Women International to update the Department's sexual assault investigation policies as well as train its sworn personnel on best practices. The City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and TCC have all instituted improved personnel policies regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking. Finally, Tallahassee

Recommendations

Local law enforcement agencies should increase their capacities to conduct in-depth investigations of sexual violence reports by increasing the number of investigators on staff with specific training in both 1) responding to the unique needs of sexual violence victims, and 2) conducting thorough and consistent investigations.

Keeping victim needs and confidentiality in mind, the community should examine the feasibility of, and implement if possible, a shared data system to track locally occurring incidents of sexual violence.

The local community should work to implement a community-wide awareness program focusing on bystander intervention.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Sexual violence: Facts at a glance. Retrieved June 1, 2015 from www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/sv-datasheet-a.pdf.

² Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. (2009). Statistics. Retrieved May 20, 2015 from <https://www.rainn.org/statistics>.

³ Ibid.

Memorial Hospital and Refuge House are working collaboratively to create a new, standalone facility at which victims of sexual violence can receive forensic exams.

There is no question that creating an environment in which more perpetrators are held accountable increases public safety. A 2002 study found that, while only a small percentage of men committed rape, those that did were responsible for an average of six assaults each.⁴ In other words, the vast majority of sexual assaults are committed by serial offenders who will continue to rape until they are stopped. Victims who have the courage to report an assault are the best weapons a community has against rapists, and it is critical that the system treats them with sensitivity and respect. Re-victimization and victim-blaming hurt not only the individual survivor involved, but also the entire community by deterring other victims from coming forward.

One way in which Tallahassee/Leon County can increase victims' likelihood to report attacks is by ensuring that its local law enforcement agencies are equipped to conduct thorough investigations and that their staff is specifically trained to work collaboratively with victims. To that end, the CSWG has recommended that **local law enforcement agencies should increase their capacities to conduct in-depth investigations of sexual violence reports by increasing the number of investigators on staff with specific training in both 1) responding to the unique needs of sexual violence victims, and 2) conducting thorough and consistent investigations.**

Another issue identified by the CSWG is the lack of uniform statistics regarding sexual assaults occurring in Tallahassee/Leon County. Because various institutions maintain their own statistics, there is little understanding of how reported cases may relate to one another. For example, a victim may report to FSU and Refuge House, but not to TPD. Or, they may report to TPD, but not to any other agency. Because agencies are not cross-checking their cases against each other, the community does not know the number of unique cases that are actually reported each year. Furthermore, there is insufficient data regarding demographics of victims and perpetrators, and little geographic information about where assaults originate (i.e., where assailants first meet potential victims). **Keeping victim needs and confidentiality in mind, the community should examine the feasibility of, and implement if possible, a shared data system to track locally occurring incidents of sexual violence.**

Finally, the best way to improve this community's response to sexual assault is to prevent rape in the first place. Bystander intervention training focuses on educating individuals and groups to recognize the warning signs of a potential sexual assault and to intervene beforehand by taking steps to separate victim and assailant. Such training also focuses on cultural stereotypes about rape and helps to foster a better understanding of gender dynamics, sexual violence, and consent. While there has been an effort to implement bystander intervention training within some of our area's institutions, we recommend that **the local community should work to implement a community-wide awareness program focusing on bystander intervention.**

Overall, the robust response from stakeholders and others to the CSWG's examination of this issue makes it clear that the Tallahassee/Leon County community is concerned about our local institutions' response to sexual assault. While there have been a number of positive steps taken over recent months, there is still much to be done to improve services to victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Mother Teresa once said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." Taking inspiration from her words, the CSWG hopes that this report will serve as a proverbial stone to create ripples that will empower victims and decrease the occurrence of sexual violence in North Florida and beyond.

⁴ Lisak, D., & Miller, P. M. (2002). Repeat rape and multiple offending among undetected rapists. *Violence and Victims*, 17(1), 73-84.



**Tallahassee/Leon County Commission
on the Status of Women and Girls**

To download the entire report or learn more about the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, please visit <http://www.tallahasseeleoncswg.com>. You can also reach The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, Inc., by phone at (850) 222-2747.

Executive Summary designed by BraveArt, LLC



Appendix G: Published “My View”s/Letters to the Editor

Appendix G.1: Tallahassee Democrat “My View”: Identity Theft

Johnson/Ofuani: Women often targets for identity theft

Jane Johnson and Sharon Ofuani, My View 8:39 a.m. EST January 26, 2015



It is not always a good thing to be at the top of a list – especially when it is a ranking of identity theft complaints. But according to the Federal Trade Commission’s Consumer Sentinel Network Databook, Florida had the highest rate of reported identity theft complaints per 100,000 people in the nation between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2013.

In that same report, Tallahassee was ranked fifth in the nation among large metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) for per capita identity theft-related consumer complaints, with 179.4 complaints per 100,000 people. This ranking puts our community ahead of Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Chicago.

Those are sobering statistics — and most of us would like to believe identity theft would not happen to us, because it only happens to people who are careless. The truth is, however, identity thieves are equal opportunity exploiters, and they victimize individuals of all ages, genders and socio-economic groups.

For women with limited financial means, it can be particularly devastating. If credit cards or bank accounts are hacked into, a person’s life savings — and opportunity for future credit — can be wiped out.

Senior women living alone are prime targets of identity theft because they typically have low credit card balances, little debt and they may not be able to regularly monitor their bank and credit card account balances. Even their Medicare cards can be used to fraudulently bill for medical equipment and services, resulting in a denial of health benefits and potential criminal allegations.

Children are also frequent victims of identity theft, and children in lower income households (often headed by single women) are disproportionately affected by this crime. For women who are the sole income earners for their families, recovering from identity theft can be a time-consuming and expensive challenge. A fraudulent credit history can take years to clear up and in the meantime, she can have trouble renting an apartment; difficulty securing a credit card, a car loan or mortgage; and she can be wrongly denied state or federal benefits. Even finding or keeping a job can be difficult, as many employers now conduct credit checks on potential employees and that unearned credit history can eliminate an innocent candidate from the applicant pool.

The best way to avoid the devastating impact of identity theft is to prevent it from happening in the first place by understanding how it happens and how you can protect yourself.

The Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is co-sponsoring with Big Bend Crime Stoppers two public forums on “Identity Protection 101.” The forums will feature Kevin Gilpin, founder and program director of the National Crime Stop Program.

Please join us from 10 a.m.-11 a.m. Monday at the Leroy Collins Public Library, 200 W. Park Ave. or from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. on Wednesday at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 316 W. Tennessee St. These forums are free and open to the public. It will be a one-hour investment of time that can save you thousands of dollars and a great deal of heartache and frustration in the future.

Jane Johnson and Sharon Ofuani are commissioners on the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

Read or Share this story: <http://on.tdo.com/1C6wD3U>

Appendix G.2: Tallahassee Democrat “My View”: CHSP

Johnson: Increase in CHSP funding needed

Jane Johnson, My View 7:45 p.m. EDT March 21, 2015



“The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.” Variations of that quote have been attributed to different people over the years, but regardless of who said it first, it is a timeless call to action.

Each year, our community responds to the call to look out for our most vulnerable neighbors and friends through the Community Human Services Partnership. CHSP is an innovative collaboration through which funds from Leon County, the City of Tallahassee and the United Way of the Big Bend are combined to provide financial support to help those in our community who need it most.

The partnership is structured to assure that 100 percent of the CHSP funds are allocated to the areas of greatest need and opportunity, supporting direct client services where the most difficult social and economic conditions exist. Nonprofit human service organizations are invited to submit detailed applications for funding to serve vulnerable city and county residents. Volunteer citizen evaluation teams are deployed to review each application and assess each agency's proposal to ensure the highest levels of integrity and objectivity in the award decision process.

This approach to supporting local human services is an effective alternative to funding traditional governmental programs. Nonprofits *are* the community – they reflect the local need, they are powered by local employees and volunteers and they are funded through private, state and federal grants and local donations. Those funds can be leveraged with CHSP dollars to create the greatest possible impact.

However, the need for services in our community far exceeds the available resources. And due to a number of factors including difficult economic conditions during the global recession, CHSP allocations have decreased nearly \$1 million from their historic high of \$5.3 million in 2010 to \$4.3 million last year.

The needs of our community are real. While poverty alone is an incomplete indicator, it is typically correlated with other serious social and economic challenges. In Leon County, 23.2 percent of residents live below the poverty line, compared to the statewide average of 16.3 percent.

The Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is calling upon city and county commissioners to increase the city and county investment in CHSP to better address critical local needs. The programs funded by CHSP are keeping children safe and healthy, strengthening families, protecting victims of domestic violence, sheltering those without housing and giving thousands of individuals hope for a better life. The city and county's response to this vital need will indeed be a true measure of our community.

Jane Johnson is a commissioner on the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

Read or Share this story: <http://on.tdo.com/1HgR5Oy>

Appendix G.3: Tallahassee Democrat “My View”: StarMetro Survey

Take survey to help improve StarMetro’s routes and times

Jane Johnson and Roxanne Hughes, My View 1:11 p.m. EDT May 11, 2015



If you are lucky enough to own a car, imagine yourself without it. Now go through your daily and weekly routines and solve for your transportation dilemma. The obvious answer for most is, “I would take the bus.” Many residents in our community do just that, though they might tell you that it can be challenging.

During the course of several community conversations last fall, the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) gained insight about the challenges women and girls often face in trying to achieve or maintain economic security. One was the critical role that reliable and safe public transportation plays as a bridge to employment, higher education and personal well-being. We heard from

women who rely on StarMetro as their primary method of transportation and women who would rely on public transportation if it met their needs that:

- There are areas of Tallahassee and Leon County, such as Woodville, which are not served by the current bus routes.
- Parents who have to take a bus to work must make multiple stops to drop kids off and get to work – and many day care centers are not on bus routes – leading to early wake-up times and long commutes.
- Students who live far from campus may feel unsafe using public transportation when trying to get home from campus at night.
- Grocery shopping for older adults who no longer drive is difficult on the bus and so they must rely on friends and family to either take them to the grocery store or do their grocery shopping for them.
- The costs of owning and maintaining a car may exceed the cost of using public transportation, but the time and convenience tradeoffs you have to make to ride the bus can actually be more expensive in the long run.

Based on the feedback that we heard during our community conversations, it seems that StarMetro has done a good job of making public transportation affordable, but being able to afford the bus is only one piece of the puzzle — it also has to be able to get you where you need to go, when you need to get there.

The CSWG has collaborated with StarMetro to assess how service options for buses can be improved to meet the needs of women, girls and all residents working to build economic security for themselves and their families. Together with Brian Waterman, StarMetro’s transit planning manager, we have developed a short survey — now we need *your* help!

We urge all members of our community to participate in the Star Metro survey at: www.starmetrosurvey.com by May 23 to provide important data which will inform StarMetro’s decisions about routes, times and other service issues next year and in the future.

Jane Johnson and Roxanne Hughes are Commissioners on the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

PARTICIPATE:

Take the survey at StarMetroSurvey.com by May 23.



Local sexual assault report shows progress, needs

Jessica Lowe-Minor, My View 3:40 p.m. EDT June 23, 2015



The statistics are staggering. Nearly one in five American women will be a victim of rape in her lifetime. In the vast majority of assaults, the perpetrator is someone who was known to the victim, and yet only 32 percent of rapes are ever reported to law enforcement and only 2 percent of rapists ever spend a day in jail.

Earlier this week, the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) released its "Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County." The report represents a 13-month effort to: 1.) learn what local policies, procedures and services were already in place; 2.) determine what are considered national "best practices"; and 3.) develop recommendations to improve response and prevention efforts.

The CSWG consulted with more than 50 stakeholders and community members who helped collect data and verify findings. There have been several institutional advancements in the past year.

- Tallahassee Community College's Police Department entered into a collaborative relationship with Refuge House.
- FSU established its "kNOw More Sexual Violence" campaign.
- FAMU implemented a new sexual misconduct policy.
- The Tallahassee Police Department partnered with End Violence Against Women International to update the department's sexual assault investigation policies as well as train its sworn personnel on best practices.
- The city of Tallahassee, Leon County and TCC all instituted improved personnel policies regarding domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking.
- Tallahassee Memorial Hospital and Refuge House began work on a new, standalone facility for victims of sexual violence.

These advances represent a major step in the right direction. Now we need to continue moving forward by ensuring that our local law enforcement agencies have enough personnel to conduct thorough investigations and that their staffs are specifically trained to work collaboratively with victims.

Additionally, we must do a better job with data collection. Because institutions maintain their own statistics, the community does not know the number of unique cases that are reported each year. Our community needs a shared data system to track locally occurring incidents of sexual violence.

Finally, we can do more to prevent sexual assaults from occurring in the first place. By implementing a community-wide bystander intervention program, we can address the root causes of sexual assault and empower concerned citizens to make a difference. Such training also focuses on cultural stereotypes about rape and helps foster a better understanding of gender dynamics, sexual violence and consent.

While there have been a number of positive steps taken over the past year, there is still much we can do to improve services to victims, hold perpetrators accountable and create a safer community for all of our residents.

Jessica Lowe-Minor is the Chair of the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. She can be reached via email at Jessica.A.Lowe@gmail.com.

Read or Share this story: <http://on.tdo.com/1LsaUba>

Appendix G.5: Tallahassee Democrat Letter to the Editor: Sexual Assault Interview Room

Thursday letters

4:40 p.m. EDT July 1, 2015

Sometimes small solutions are helpful

On Monday, the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls released its "Report on Sexual Violence Response in Tallahassee/Leon County." As part of its examination of the issue, commissioners visited the room set aside for interviewing sexual assault victims at TPD.

One commissioner – Ruth Nickens – fully grasped the complexity of the problem of sexual assault, but also believed a small act could make a difference. She volunteered to re-decorate the interview room to provide a more comforting environment for traumatized victims. Nickens didn't solve the problem of sexual assault in our community, but her kind and generous actions will blunt the pain of those forced to live through it.

Don't underestimate the impact of regular acts of kindness and generosity – they can transform society.

JANE JOHNSON

Tallahassee

janeelizjohnson@hotmail.com



Sexual Violence: Current Dangers and Future Changes

PUBLISHED AUGUST 11, 2015



**By Ada Puryear Burnette, Ph.D.,
Member of the Tallahassee/Leon County
Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

Past and Current data on the status of sexual violence against females in the United States of America are staggering. Almost 1 in 5 American women are victims of rape during their lifetimes. Although women of all ages are victims, 44 percent are under age 18 and 80 percent are under age 30. Four of the five assaults were committed by someone known to the victim although 68 percent of rapes are never reported to law enforcement and approximately only 2 percent of rapists ever spend any time in jail.

The incidences on college campuses in the United States have increased at an astonishing rate in recent years. The media has been most responsive recently to the ways in which Tallahassee has handled sexual violence. Some high profile cases clearly showed that the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CSWG) had to perform a comprehensive study of how sexual assault cases have been and are handled.

This year-long study has resulted in a lengthy report that provided information on local policies, procedures and services related to sexual assault; determined models seen as best practices in the nation; and, developed significant recommendations designed to improve the response to and prevention of sexual violence in this community. Over 50 stakeholders, community members, and some CSWG members, the CSWG's Sexual Assault Policy Group, helped to collect the data and ensure the accuracy of the data. Information was gathered in the areas of prevention, medical care, follow-up, school and workplace

responses, investigation and prosecution, and interagency collaboration. The data clearly show that Tallahassee can take many steps to reduce sexual violence significantly and that there have been several institutional advances. Among these has been the Tallahassee Community College's (TCC) Police Department's memorandum of understanding with Refuge House, a community service program that deals with sexual assault. Florida A&M University implemented a sexual misconduct policy as part of its Student Code of Conduct. Florida State University created a full-time Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator position and set up the 'kNOW MORE' Sexual Violence Prevention Campaign. The Tallahassee Police Department has partnered with End Violence Against Women International to update its sexual assault investigation policies and to train its personnel on best practices. The city of Tallahassee, Leon County, and TCC have put into practice improved policies for sexual violence, domestic violence, and stalking. Tallahassee Memorial Hospital and Refuge House are working together to establish a standalone facility where victims of sexual violence can receive forensic examinations, treatment, and advice.

A 2002 study showed that the majority of sexual assaults are committed by serial offenders. The best weapon against these predators is victims who have the courage to report their attacks and a system that treats victims with respect and sensitivity. Recommendations by the CSWG are to ensure that personnel in local law enforcement agencies are trained to work with victims, to investigate reported cases by increasing the number of staff assigned to this area, to respond to the needs of the victims, and to conduct thorough and consistent investigations. All agencies should develop a consistent method of collecting, cross-checking, getting data on victims and assailants, being confidential of victims, and installing procedures to prevent rape and sexual assault. Community members must be educated on sexual assault as well as prevention and reporting strategies. Tallahassee is on the right track to prevent sexual violence which is largely on females although males are also victims. Significant measures must be taken against all perpetrators and the Tallahassee/Leon Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is commended for its major actions.



Appendix H: CSWG 2014-2015 Media Mentions

Appendix H.1: Articles about CSWG Work

- February 21, 2015 “Dobson: Poverty exercise brings out real-life scenarios” by Byron Dobson, *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/opinion/columnists/dobson/2015/02/21/dobson-poverty-exercise-brings-real-life-scenarios/23796821/>
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- June 22, 2015 “Stakeholders tackle sexual violence” by Sean Rossman *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2015/06/22/stakeholders-tackle-sexual-violence/29136033/>
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<http://www.fsunews.com/story/news/2015/06/24/tpd-sexual-assault-report/29234001/>
- July 13, 2015 “Commission Set to Implement Bystander Intervention Program” by Rebekah Entralgo *WFSU News* <http://news.wfsu.org/post/commission-set-implement-bystander-intervention-program>
- July 20, 2015 “Tallahassee Committee Trying to Put End to Sexual Assault” *WTXL News*
http://www.wtxl.com/news/tallahassee-committee-trying-to-put-end-to-sexual-assault/article_101ecc7a-2f2e-11e5-8af6-67941f5e8c7e.html
- August 24, 2015 “Upcoming Local Business Workshops To Target Women Veterans, Low-Income Women” By Sascha Cordner *WFSU News*
<http://news.wfsu.org/post/upcoming-local-business-workshops-target-women-veterans-low-income-women>
- Sept 17, 2015 “The struggle is real’ regarding economic security for women, girls” *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/2015/09/17/struggle-real-regarding-economic-security-women-girls/72358660/>
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<http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=a1b78093888847317ee673fce&id=4dbecaf703&e=706e708b34>



Appendix H.2: Media Mentions of the CSWG and Commissioners

- May 31, 2014 “Community’s response to sexual assault in the spotlight“ by Jennifer Portman, *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2014/05/31/communitys-response-sexual-assault-spotlight/9830001/>
- January 17, 2015 “Celebrating the legacy of MLK, continuing his work“ *Tallahassee Democrat* <http://www.tallahassee.com/story/opinion/2015/01/17/celebrating-legacy-martin-luther-king-jr-continuing-struggle/21919967/>
- March 18, 2015 “Business briefs: INIE selects Lowe-Minor as director”
Tallahassee Democrat
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/money/2015/03/18/business-briefs/24996707/>
- March 18, 2015 “Tallahassee Democrat announces 25 Women You Need to Know 2015” by Gerald Ensley, *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2015/02/28/best-brightest-women-need-know/24166967/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin=>
- March 20, 2015 “Kelly Otte goes from founder to honoree at Oasis by C.E. Hanifin,
Tallahassee Democrat
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/life/causes/2015/03/20/kelly-otte-goes-founder-honoree-oasis/25053921/>
- March 21, 2015 “Groups make case for more human services funding” *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/money/2015/03/21/groups-make-case-human-services-funding/25166351/>
- March 28, 2015 “Report highlights impact of human services“ by Kelly Otte and Alyce Lee Stansbury, *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.tallahassee.com/story/money/2015/03/28/report-highlights-impact-human-services/70617732/>
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- August 5, 2015 “The Empowerment Project Coming to Tallahassee” by Kellie Bartolli, *WTXL News* http://www.wtxl.com/community/the-empowerment-project-coming-to-tallahassee/article_80c5dc2c-3b4d-11e5-a19c-b7d354d7afb3.html
- August 11, 2015 Ladies Learning to Lead by Tom Flanigan, *WFSU News*
<http://news.wfsu.org/post/ladies-learning-lead>
- August 24, 2015 “#SoMuchMoreThanFootball” by David Walker. *Tallahassee Democrat*
<http://www.fsunews.com/story/news/2015/07/16/somuchmorethanfootball/30225769/>