

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT



CSWG

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

An advisory board of



HISTORY, PURPOSE, MISSION AND LEADERSHIP

In April 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 2013, the City of Tallahassee joined Leon 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 CSWG consists of 21 members. All CSWG commissioners serve on a volunteer basis. Citizens must apply to be considered for appointment. The City and County contract with a local not-for-profit, The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, to staff the CSWG. Oasis was instrumental in encouraging the community to establish the CSWG and continues to play an important role in helping the CSWG fulfill its mission. There are three topic-focused committees and a governance committee made up of committee chairs and CSWG leadership: Education and Economic Security, Health and Development, Violence and Safety, and Organization and Bylaws. Each committee and the full commission meet monthly in accordance with the Sunshine Law.

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 resolution 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."

In April 2019, City Attorney Cassandra Jackson clarified the role of the CSWG, noting, "the resolutions authorize the CSWG to advocate before the City Commission and Board of County Commissioners about issues affecting women and girls in the community." Her memorandum cites the enabling resolution language which charges the CSWG "with the responsibility of providing input and recommendations to the Board and the Commission, as needed, on approaches with which to address issues affecting women and girls."

To that end, and with the honor of serving residents of the City and County in this manner, the 2018-2019 Tallahassee-Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls presents this year's annual report, detailing the work of the commission and the resulting recommendations for supporting and improving the lives of women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County.

MISSION AND VISION

As an advisory board of the City Commission and Board of County Commissioners, our purpose is to educate, promote, and recommend public policy regarding issues that affect women and girls in our area. Our task is to help community members and elected leadership understand how the intersection of different sets of identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) impact access to rights and opportunities. We aim to serve as the premier advocate and leading voice for improving the lives of women and girls in the communities encompassed by Tallahassee-Leon County.



Gina Giacomo
COMMISSION CHAIR



Elizabeth Jakubowski
COMMISSION VICE CHAIR

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With special thanks to Michelle Gomez, Executive Director, and staff of The Oasis Center for Women & Girls; the Tallahassee City Commission and staff; the Leon County Board of County Commissioners and staff; and the residents of Tallahassee-Leon County.

Why I Serve

“To make a difference in the lives of women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County.”

- Gina Giacomo, 2018-2019 Commission Chair

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 2018-2019 commission year, the Tallahassee-Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls worked to raise awareness about and develop collaborative strategies to address pressing issues involving women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County, including high rates of poverty or financial insecurity among women, high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and strategies for reducing the occurrence of sexual assault and power-based violence against women.

Commissioners initiated partnerships and leveraged existing relationships to achieve progress in these critical areas. The breadth of partnership pursued by the CSWG extends throughout our community and includes local and state government, private for-profit business, nonprofit organizations and human service agencies, media, educational institutions, and community advocates. The full list of partners contributing to the work detailed in this report numbers more than 50, a sample of which can be found on the facing page.

To foster a broader understanding of the impact of the efforts made by the CSWG for the benefit of new and existing City and County commissioners, CSWG leadership compiled a list of some of the advancements in the status of women and girls achieved with the support of CSWG since its inception in 2011. The list, found on page 5, includes improvements to public safety procedures and training, workplace policies that increase support for women employees, improvements to communication and functionality among human service providers, and more. A snapshot of the advisory board's work, the list will be maintained, updated, and included in periodic reports to the Tallahassee City Commission and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners.

Strides in Governance Spur Strategic Change

The Organization and Bylaws Committee (OBC) undertook the task of drafting a three-year strategic plan, with input from commissioner liaisons of both the City and County governing bodies. The strategic plan identifies a new, collective impact approach to addressing the critical issues facing women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County with guidance for improved communication between the CSWG and the local governments it serves. The new framework represents a significant evolution of the commission's work with improvements to efficiency, responsiveness, cohesion, and potential impact.

Moving forward, in consultation with liaisons on the City Commission and Board of County Commissioners, the CSWG leadership will identify one pressing issue facing the community on which to focus the advisory

board's efforts each year. Committees will work on the issue within their subject areas, guided by the goals and initiatives outlined in the strategic plan. They will select appropriate strategies to contribute collaborative, solutions-oriented work and produce actionable policy and funding recommendations to achieve progress in critical areas. The plan is aligned with City and County goals and will be reviewed for updates on a bi-annual basis.

Committee Work Addresses Critical Issues of Poverty, Infectious Disease, and Crime

While the OBC worked to strengthen the foundation and future of the commission, the topic area committees worked to amplify critical issues and foster change through research, partnership, planning, and advocacy.

The Education and Economic Security Committee responded to the heightened awareness around poverty in Tallahassee-Leon County and worked to amplify understanding of economic hardship as it relates to women. Nearly 80% of the women heads of household with children live daily in significant danger of being unable to meet their financial needs. In fact, according to Data USA, women make up the largest demographic of Leon County residents living in poverty.



Education and Economic Security Committee members (from left) Amber R. Tynan, Gwendolyn Singleton, and Wendi Cannon discuss committee business.

To better address the issue comprehensively and bring multi-sector decision making to bear on solutions, the committee began planning a Women's Economic Security Summit to take place in October 2019. The summit steering committee reflects a wide swath of area leaders. The goal of the summit is to convene leaders across disciplines and political leanings to find common

ground, make connections, deepen understanding, and explore solutions to the greatest financial and economic challenges facing women today. Attendees will gain a foundation for initiating change in the circumstance of poverty and economic insecurity for residents of Tallahassee-Leon County.

The Health and Development Committee tackled a public health crisis for which women bear a significant burden: sexually transmitted infections. Leon County is #1 in Florida and among the top 10 in the nation for rates of sexually transmitted infections, with health officials calling the sharp rise in primary and congenital syphilis “a sentinel event.” As the rate of STIs in Leon County surpasses other “university towns” in Florida and across the nation, the dramatic increase in syphilis and overall high rates of STIs cannot be exclusively explained by the large student population.

The committee engaged public health officials, public school officials, post-secondary personnel, medical practitioners, insurance providers, information technology experts, and the media to gather information on the scope of the problem, potential strategies, and opportunities for collaborative solutions. Their work is detailed in this report on pages 12-13 and will continue.

The Violence and Safety Committee worked to address violence against women in a year that saw shocking tragedy in the mass shooting at the Hot Yoga studio in Midtown, when a member of one of the Internet’s most dangerous subcultures, “incels” (involuntary celibate), targeted the location to kill women. Speaking at a press conference in February, then-Chief of Police, Michael DeLeo, described evidence that a “lifetime of misogynistic attitudes caused [the shooter] to attack a familiar community where he had been arrested several times for his previous violent action toward women.” Scott Beierle, 40, succeeded in killing a female student and professor at Florida State University and injuring five others before killing himself. According to an April 2019 article in Vox, the perpetrator is now being glorified by other incels online as “St. YogaCel.”

From this and other tragic losses of women’s lives by violence and sexual assaults of young women, both locally and nationally, the committee turned its attention to restructuring the public perception of violence against women. Rather than isolated tragic incidents, the Violence and Safety Committee is bringing awareness to the fact that these tragedies represent actions on a continuum of violence, the lesser of which often is dismissed or downplayed. The committee produced a list of tips for recognizing microaggressions, or behaviors regarded as subtle forms of discrimination against a marginalized group. The list is found on page 16. The committee also

convened several service provider workshops to support the people delivering front line services to survivors.

With suggestions for improving civic access and engagement, financial support services and pay equity, health information awareness, gender bias awareness, and public safety operations, the 2018-2019 Tallahassee-Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls proudly presents a report of its work and offers recommendations to the Tallahassee City Commission and Leon County Board of County Commissioners.

Along with the Women’s Economic Security Summit steering committee members listed on page 16, the following people and organizations provided material information and partnership to the work of the CSWG:

- American Council of Education (FAMU/FSU/TCC)
- Terry Anderson, Leon County Schools
- Meg Baldwin, JD, Refuge House
- Claudia Blackburn, RN, Florida Department of Health
- Jennie Brock, Wellcare Health Plans
- Tony Carvajal, Florida Chamber of Commerce
- Alan Cox, PhD, Leon County Schools
- James Easton, Florida Department of Health
- Talethia Edwards, Greater Bond Neighborhood Association
- Kimolyn Ferrell, Dare to Dream
- Lashawn Gordon, Pace-Leon Center for Girls
- Dale Harrison, Florida Department of Health
- Pat Holliday, City of Tallahassee
- David Hulse, Bank of America
- Liz Joyner, The Village Square
- Claudia Machado, Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- Unam Mansoor, Florida Department of Health
- Wachell McKendrick, PhD, Turn About Inc.
- Emily Mitchem, Refuge House
- Dominique Moore, Women With Worth
- Taylor Novak, Refuge House
- Cristina Paredes, Office of Economic Vitality
- Dr. Faye Rozwadowski, Florida Department of Health
- RoseAnn Scheck, Florida Department of Health
- Kelly Sciba, Florida Commission on the Status of Women
- Dr. Joedrecka Brown Speights, FSU College of Medicine
- Stomp Out Syphilis Coalition
- Tallahassee District Church School Convention
- Robin Hassler Thompson, JD, Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center
- United Partners for Human Services
- Alexandria Washington, United States of Women
- Scott Weisman, Leon County GIS Program Office
- Craig Wilson, Florida Department of Health

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Toward improvement in the lives of women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County, the 2018-2019 Tallahassee-Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls recommends that:

	The City Commission and the Board of County Commissioners explore options for expanding civic participation in local government by providing childcare during public meetings.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County governments support the organization and delivery of an annual Women's Economic Security Summit.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County governments collaborate with the CSWG to develop an action plan that addresses economic security for women, based on outcomes of the 2019 Women's Economic Security Summit.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County governments prioritize expanding funding to organizations that work to improve women's financial security, based on the Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP) needs assessment.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County communication departments collaborate to raise public awareness about the rates, prevention strategies, and treatments available for sexually transmitted infections.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County communication departments pursue partnerships with secondary and post-secondary educational institutions to disseminate information and amplify messaging about sexually transmitted infections.
	The Board of County Commissioners continue to support increased funding for staff of the Florida Department of Health-Leon, as in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget in response to increased incidence of sexually transmitted infections in Leon County and the need for additional personnel.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County governments collaborate with the CSWG to develop a public dashboard on the status of women and girls' well-being to present measurements of key indicators in their economic security, health, and safety as a way of informing local governing bodies and the community about areas where improvement is needed and where progress is being made.
	The City Commission conduct a gender pay equity study of its staff and publish the findings.
	The City Commission and the Board of County Commissioners give priority consideration in the public bid process to vendors who demonstrate gender pay equity and family-friendly leave policies.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County communications and public safety departments collaborate with the CSWG to develop training guidelines that support appropriate portrayal of women and girls in media and public safety reports.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County governments host a Green Dot training for staff, at least annually, to foster a supportive and inclusive workplace culture that does not abide any actions along the continuum of violence.
	The City of Tallahassee and Leon County governments include information and training on gender and race based microaggressions to their workplace policies.
	The City Commission and the Board of County Commissioners modify their advisory board applications to include the opportunity to provide additional information regarding the applicant's motivation to serve on the CSWG.

IMPACT OF THE CSWG

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC SECURITY

- **Summit on Women and the Workplace**—A first of its kind summit brought together over 220 participants and experts from the area and the nation to learn and strategize ways to improve how women can be more economically secure at work. Most (96%) surveyed said they would apply what they learned to improve the status of women in their workplace.
- **Poverty Simulation**—The CSWG hosted a poverty simulation in partnership with the United Way of the Big Bend to increase awareness of and empathy for the daily stressors faced by nearly 1/3 of our population, mostly women with children.
- **Financial Education for Women**—Tallahassee Leon Federal Credit Union, the CSWG, and the Oasis Center for Women & Girls hosted a free financial workshop series for women.
- **Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprise Programs Evaluation**—The 2014-2015 CSWG chair was appointed to the MWSBE Programs Evaluation Committee. She contributed to the Final Report and Consideration of the Recommendations for Program Improvement.

HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Girls' Services Coalition**—For the first time, the many groups and people who provide services to girls achieved a place to network, coordinate services, leverage resources and work together to better assist girls to grow and thrive.
- **Funding Increase for Human Services**—The CSWG advocated for an increase to human services funding. Leon County Commission increased funding for CHSP to \$1,000,000. Tallahassee City Commission increased its support to \$1,600,000.
- **Community Focus on the Needs and Achievements of Girls**—The CSWG hosted the “Igniting the Power Within: Women and Girls Empowerment Summit,” where over 260 women and girls, vendors, City and County Commissioners, and panelists came together to empower, inspire, and share vital information on numerous topics important to women and girls.
- **Inclusive Parental Leave Policy**—The Board of County Commissioners and City Commission both unanimously voted to provide paid parental leave to employees. Both men and women are eligible to receive six weeks of paid leave to care for and bond with a newborn or newly adopted child.

VIOLENCE & SAFETY

- **County and City Policies on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Stalking**—Addressing issues brought by the CSWG and with over 100 hours of CSWG technical assistance, both the City and County have adopted the most comprehensive and supportive policies to address both victimization and perpetration of these crimes at the workplace. Over 3,500 employees will be educated and receive support so that both their workplaces and the community are safer. FSU and TCC have since adopted similar policies.
- **Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Response by Law Enforcement**—Tallahassee Police Department (TPD) adopted a new policy on sexual assault investigations that was developed in collaboration with End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI). TPD requires all sworn personnel to take five training courses on sexual assault investigations. The TPD interview room was painted and decorated specifically for victims of sexual assault.
- **Supportive Treatment Space for Survivors of Sexual Assault**—Refuge House and Tallahassee Memorial Hospital created a stand-alone facility for sexual violence victims to receive forensic exams, separate from the emergency room, called the SAFE Center.

STRATEGIC REVIEW UPDATE: COMPLETE

In 2016, the CSWG determined there was a need to engage in strategic planning to better support the City and County governments in meeting the needs of women and girls in the Tallahassee-Leon County community, and ultimately convened a CSWG Strategic Planning Working Group, which consisted of the following members:

Leon County Commissioner Kristin Dozier, City of Tallahassee Commissioner Curtis Richardson, 2015-2016 CSWG Chair Sha’Ron James, 2016-2017 CSWG Chair Paula DeBoles-Johnson, and Haley Cutler, then-executive director of The Oasis Center for Women & Girls.

The 2018-19 CSWG continued to work on accomplishing the goals and initiatives established by the strategic review. The strategic review is now complete, and a strategic plan is presented among the work detailed in this annual report.

Initiative 1: Improve the CSWG’s ability to respond to ongoing and immediate issues, emerging and existing City and County policy, and broader issues affecting women and girls.		
	Responsible Party	Current Status: Sept. 2019
Goal 1: Develop a plan to create a collaborative effort to respond to established issues identified by City and County Commissioners and identify emerging policy issues to include actionable recommendations.	CSWG	Complete: The 2017-2018 CSWG approved new policies (Policy #018 “Policy Procedures and Policy #019 “Policy Topics) at the August 2017 meeting to identify and respond to emerging policy issues.
Goal 2: Conduct a comprehensive review of and make recommendations regarding all existing recommendations presented by the CSWG.	CSWG	Complete: The 2017-2018 CSWG Policy Committee completed a review and provided recommendations in September 2017.
Goal 3: Assess partnership opportunities with other governmental and nongovernmental entities.	CSWG/LCC/COT	Complete: While partnership assessment and development will remain ongoing, CSWG has empowered its members to identify and pursue topic-specific partners each commission year. Regular communication with City and County staff has been established to keep abreast of opportunities to partner with and amplify governmental initiatives that relate to or can be enhanced by participation of women and girls. Partnerships are documented in public meeting minutes and noted in periodic reports.

Initiative 2: Create a Commission structure that ensures the accomplishment of goals and cultivate an environment in which CSWG Commissioners are valued for their contributions and strengths.		
	Responsible Party	Current Status: Sept. 2019
Goal 1: Review and make recommendations regarding the CSWG board appointment process and structure.	CSWG/LCC/COT/ Oasis	Complete: The Organization and Bylaws committee recommends the application be modified to include questions allowing for additional information regarding the applicant’s skills and abilities relevant to the CSWG’s mission.
Goal 2: Review and make recommendations regarding the standing committee structure, CSWG bylaws, policies, and procedures.	CSWG	Complete: The 2017-2018 CSWG adopted the recommendations for aligning committee structure with policy areas and organized its work across three committees. The Strategic Plan has been organized around the three policy areas.
Goal 3: Develop a strategic communications plan that is aligned with the CSWG mission.	CSWG	Complete: A strategic communications plan has been developed to enact the communication goal and initiatives of the strategic plan.
Goal 4: Review and make recommendations to Oasis, City, and County regarding staffing needs.	CSWG	Complete: Staffing needs are sufficiently met through the current arrangement. Appropriate staffing levels are reviewed annually by the CSWG as part of the budgeting process.

Initiative 3: Create and adopt a multi-year Strategic Plan which incorporates the initiatives and goals established during the 2016-2017 strategic review.		
	Responsible Party	Current Status: Sept. 2019
Goal 1: Strategic Plan will be developed based on this Strategic Review	CSWG/LCC/COT/ Oasis	Complete: A three-year Strategic Plan is included in the 2018-2019 Annual Report.

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: 2019-2022

The CSWG Strategic Plan serves as a three-year roadmap, a living document reviewed bi-annually and revised as needed to (1) support responsiveness to the requests of, and in support of issues identified by, the City Commission and Board of County Commissioners, (2) provide guidance to new CSWG commissioners, (3) promote consistency in expectations through leadership transitions, and (4) provide a framework for regular review of progress on initiatives, demonstrating the CSWG's intention to advocate for policies that improve the lives of women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County.

Alignment of Goals

The plan is based on the extensive list of recommendations provided by the 2012-2013 CSWG and revised into five key issue areas by the policy committee of the 2016-2017 commission. Beginning in the 2017-2018 commission year, committees are now organized by these issue areas to focus policy recommendations and progress reports: Education & Economic Security, Health & Development, and Violence & Safety. The strategic plan organizes goals for the work of the commission around these issue areas and includes a fourth goal to improve and support communication among CSWG commissioners and their audiences.

The goals identified in this strategic plan will support Leon County 2017-2021 Strategic Plan goals focusing on Economy, Quality of Life, and Governance. Similarly, the 2019 Tallahassee City Commission's priorities of Quality of Life and the Impact of Poverty and Economic Development are in alignment with this plan. As a strategic plan for the City of Tallahassee is adopted, the CSWG Strategic Plan will be reviewed for alignment with identified city goals.

Collective Impact

Under the guidance of the Chair and Vice Chair, the CSWG, at its annual retreat, will identify a central focus for the year. Informed by municipal goals, with input from partners, the central focus will be addressed through the lens of each committee. Each year, the commission will produce an action plan guiding its work and outline budgetary needs according to the strategic plan. Periodic reports made to the City Commission and Board of County Commissioners will reflect progress as related to the four goals and corresponding initiatives set forth in the annual action plans. The action plan will be revised as needed to reflect the changing social and economic landscape of Tallahassee-Leon County as policy initiatives are accomplished and celebrated, and as new needs emerge.

Women and girls feel safe in their homes, workplaces, and public spaces.

Initiative A: Raise public awareness of the prevalence of violence against women and girls, and the available educational resources.

Initiative B: Increase awareness of preventative measures to reduce incidences of violence against women and girls.

Initiative C: Review and evaluate data, research, local policy, and resources.

Initiative D: Develop best practices and policy recommendations to support safety awareness and violence prevention.

GOAL 1

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: 2019-2022

Women and girls have control of their physical and mental health and feel supported in pursuing healthy social-emotional development.

Initiative A: Raise public awareness of the barriers to and issues impacting the physical, mental and social-emotional health of women and girls.

Initiative B: Increase awareness of preventative measures to reduce negative impacts on the physical, mental, and social-emotional health of women and girls.

Initiative C: Review and evaluate data, research, local policy, and resources.

Initiative D: Develop best practices and policy recommendations to support the physical, mental, and social-emotional wellbeing of women and girls.

GOAL 2

Women and girls can achieve financial independence and economic security, with unfettered access to educational and professional opportunities.

Initiative A: Raise awareness of the barriers to economic security that women and girls face, including, but not limited to, access to affordable and quality housing, healthcare, childcare, education, the Internet, and transportation.

Initiative B: Increase awareness of the benefits to representation by women and girls in fields and activities in which they are underrepresented.

Initiative C: Review and evaluate data, research, local policy, and resources.

Initiative D: Develop best practices and policy recommendations to support educational opportunity and economic security for women and girls.

GOAL 3

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: 2019-2022

The City Commission, Board of County Commissioners, and the public at large are aware of CSWG activities and perceive benefits to their work and lives.

Initiative A: Communicate regularly with elected officials and their staff to maintain and revise expectations.

Initiative B: Communicate regularly with the public to raise awareness of issues impacting women and girls, and to understand which issues are most important to women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County.

GOAL 4



2018-2019 TALLAHASSEE-LEON COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

MEMBERS



Dr. Gwendolyn Singleton, PhD
COMMITTEE CHAIR



Amber R. Tynan
SUMMIT CHAIR



Wendi Cannon



Linda Bond Edwards, Esq.



Carla Laroche, Esq.



Samantha Vance

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY COMMITTEE

The committee met monthly and worked with community partners to identify collaborative solutions for addressing women's economic security. The committee's efforts focused on ways to alleviate financial stressors for women through multi-sector collaboration, policy advocacy, and exploration of ways to support civic engagement. The committee's work was guided by data that shows a significant number of women in Tallahassee-Leon County are living in poverty or at constant risk of being unable to meet financial obligations. Single mothers are specifically vulnerable, with nearly 80% of the female heads of household with children living below the ALICE threshold (Asset-limited, Income-constrained, Employed), as described in the 2018 United Way report.

There are several key markers that affect women's ability to succeed at work. Among these are wages and working conditions, including the ability of the employee to earn a living and to balance the myriad challenges that she will face as she goes to work. There are many ways that the workplace can be friendlier to women. These might include paid leave, flexible work schedules, health care benefits, onsite childcare, ways to advocate for better working conditions, policies for domestic and sexual violence prevention and intervention, and educational opportunities.

Economic Realities for Women and Girls in Tallahassee-Leon County

- In 2017, women earned 1.33 times less for comparable work than men, and African American, Hispanic and Asian women earned less than their white counterparts.
- More men than women are employed in higher wage-earning industries and professions.
- Seventy-eight percent of single women with children under the age of 18 struggle financially, and are one car repair or medical emergency away from living in poverty.
- According to the Institute on Women's Policy Research's Basic Economic Security Report (Sept. 2018), a single woman with health insurance and retirement benefits needs full time work at \$14.99 per hour to have basic economic security from earned income.
- A working female with one preschooler and one school-age child needs an hourly wage of \$28.60 or \$60,408 annually to be economically secure. The Leon County median household income is \$51,107.
- Leon County lacks sufficient access of affordable and accessible housing, childcare and other social supports for women.

Women's Economic Security Summit 2019

The Education and Economic Security Committee of the CSWG assembled a Steering Committee with members from government, private industry, higher education, workforce development, banking and finance, health and human services, urban planning and more, to set the vision for a broad-spectrum summit highlighting issues, strategies, and partnerships for improving the economic security and opportunity for women and girls. This diverse team met four times during the commission year to establish summit goals and objectives, an agenda, budget, subcommittees, speakers, and grant funding.

Elected officials and government staff will be invited to participate with other stakeholders for an intensive discussion that provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the causes and experience of poverty as well as strategies to alleviate poverty within Tallahassee-Leon County. Phil DeVol, co-author of *Bridges Across Every Divide* and *Bridges to Sustainable Communities*, will join local experts and panelists in a strategic conversation that combines best practices from outside our community with knowledge of our specific circumstances.

The summit is scheduled for Wednesday, October 30th at the University Center Club. The goal of the summit is to convene leaders from across disciplines and political leanings to find common ground, make connections, deepen understanding, and explore solutions to the greatest financial and economic challenges facing women today. Attendees will gain a foundation for initiating change in the circumstance of poverty and economic insecurity for residents of Tallahassee-Leon County.

CSWG Speakers Database

In an ongoing effort to provide education and awareness of issues that impact women and girls in our community, and to promote the selection of women as subject matter experts in various fields, the committee compiled a database of speakers for organizations, student groups, classrooms, events, and training sessions. The searchable database is an online resource for accessing women speakers on a variety of topics. Women with expertise in STEM, empowerment, cultural competency, crisis management, business, leadership, and women's issues are invited to join. To date, fifty-six (56) speakers have registered for the publicly accessible database.

Paid Parental Leave Policy

The committee advocated for adequate paid parental leave for municipal employees. In June 2019, the City Commission unanimously passed a policy that provides six weeks of paid maternity and paternity leave. The Leon County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved a similar policy in July 2017.

Why I Serve

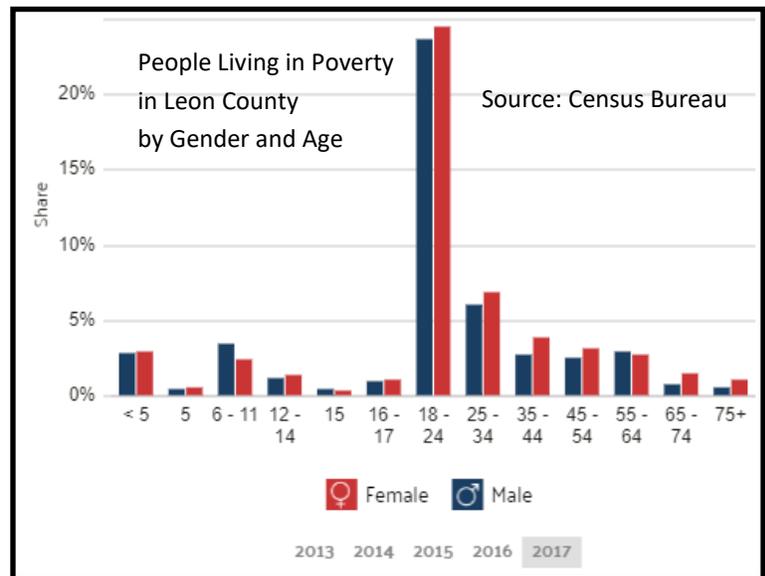
"Highlighting the strengths and challenges of women and girls makes all community members, and the community, better."

- Carla Laroche, CSWG Commissioner

Civic Engagement in City and County Commission Meetings

The committee reviewed childcare policies and practices for municipal government meetings across the state, in an effort to identify potential barriers to women's participation in City and County commission meetings. None were found to offer childcare, and few offered limited virtual or digital viewing. Both the Tallahassee City Commission and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners offer digital viewing, post-meeting materials, and provide free access to recorded meetings.

However, a person accessing meeting information through these channels cannot participate in the meetings. The only way to contribute is to appear in person and register to speak. The meeting times and lack of childcare may inhibit many low-income individuals, many of whom are women with children, from participating in their local government, diminishing the ability of government to produce inclusive and effective policies that address the needs of residents.



Women are the largest group living in poverty in Leon County. In 32304, the poorest zip code in Florida, 42% of women and children are living in poverty (not pictured).

MEMBERS



Jeanne O'Kon, PhD
COMMITTEE CHAIR



Cicely Brantley, PhD



April Deitz



Jane Johnson



Andrea Jones



Rebecca Weaver

HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The committee met monthly during this commission year, beginning in October 2018. Following a review of the data on health trends for women and girls in Leon County collected during the previous year's work of the committee, members concurred that, while there are many issues affecting the health of women in girls in the local community, they would narrow this year's focus to the topic of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This decision was based on a number of alarming statistics, including a "sentinel event" in the occurrence of congenital syphilis, as described by local health officials, who are terming the trends of STIs in Leon County a health crisis.

STI Statistical Trends in Leon County Warrant Action

- Leon County ranks #1 in Florida for rates of sexually transmitted bacterial infections (2018), a title the county has held since 2012. This category includes gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis.
- While Leon County has ranked #1 among Florida counties in gonorrhea and chlamydia since 2013, this is the first time it took the top spot in the rate of syphilis infection.
- Leon County experienced a 134% increase in syphilis cases in one year, from 2017 to 2018.
- While more of the cases of syphilis are found in men, the number of individuals infected with primary syphilis (the most infectious early stage) increased 109% in men and 300% in women from 2017 to 2018.
- Syphilis infection in women presents additional health risk since women can transfer the disease during gestation. Congenital syphilis, contracted in utero, can have even more dire health consequences and is more difficult to treat.
- Leon County ranks #6 among Florida counties in HIV/AIDS cases for 2018, showing the highest rate (27.9) in the county since 2013, in a state that ranks #1 in the nation for new HIV cases (2017).
- STIs impact women differently than men, and, in bacterial infections like chlamydia, can lead to long-term health implications that men do not suffer. Women can more easily contract STIs due to anatomical differences.
- Neighboring Gadsden County ranks #2 in sexually transmitted bacterial infections, potentially presenting an opportunity for partnership to address these critical issues. Madison County and Alachua County have shown some progress in reducing rates of STIs, warranting further study to determine applicable best practices for Leon County.

Determining Needs with Subject Matter Experts

The committee pursued individuals who could provide them with additional information about trends in women's physical and mental health in Leon County. Subject matter experts included professors, practicing physicians, public health officials, public school administrators, data technicians, private industry, and local non-profit leaders.

Women's Health

Dr. Joedrecka Brown Speights, a practicing physician at Bond Health Clinic and chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health at Florida State University, noted that barriers to health equity include poverty and powerlessness. For women, there is an intersectionality of barriers. Disparities exist in both health and health care. Health disparities represent a complex problem, as social determinants of health include educational and environmental factors, and generational stressors.

The inequities are not inevitable, as her research has determined. Eighteen states are on track to eliminate health disparities by 2050. Florida is not one of the states. Unless significant changes are made, Florida may not see the elimination of health disparities for more than a century, according to one of her co-researchers.

Locally, the rate of black infant mortality has decreased. However, the gap in mortality between black and nonblack births is widening, not shrinking, in Leon County. Black babies died at 6 times the nonblack rate in 2010. By 2017, the ratio had increased to 9.

Dr. Brown Speights said she is shocked to see primary and congenital syphilis in her practice. She said the concern is significant for women in Leon County and noted the CDC recommendation for women under 25 to be screened every 3 months. She also suggested engaging students in meaningful discussion regarding sexual health—specifically, the intersection of personal freedom and healthy behaviors—and facilitating space for open dialogue.

STIs Rates and Sexual Health Education

Representatives of Leon County Schools and the Florida Department of Health-Leon County (FDOH) presented to the committee in a dynamic discussion about the public health crisis of STIs in Leon County and the availability of sexual health education in public schools.

Claudia Blackburn, health officer for Leon County, noted that STIs disproportionately affect African-American women, who represent 81% of sexually transmitted infections, mostly ages 15-24 years old. Despite the bacterial infection rate reaching crisis levels, there is no new funding from the state to combat the issue. The health department is investigating every new case of

Why I Serve

“It is important to me that the community is made aware of the unique strengths, accomplishments, and challenges that define women and girls in Tallahassee-Leon County.”

- Jane Johnson, CSWG Commissioner

syphilis in pregnant women and in patients under 15 years old, but does not have funding to investigate other cases and other STIs.

The increase in rates of syphilis has alarmed public health official across the country and has been deemed a nationwide priority. Leon County ranks #5 in Florida for infection rate of syphilis, with Franklin and Gadsden Counties ranking #1 and #2 for 2018. Frighteningly, Leon County ranks #1 for 2018 in the rate of congenital syphilis transmission, from mother to child.

Due to constraints on curriculum mandated by state government, Leon County Schools has limited time and delivery vehicles for sexual health information, according to Alan Cox, Assistant Superintendent of Health and Wellness. Though direct instruction is ideal, integrated curriculum is the only option they have. Biology and healthy choice lessons focus on vaping and obesity. There is competition for electives from financial literacy and performing arts. Sexual health often loses out, amounting to five days of instruction during the year.

A promising model was presented from Madison County, which received a Safe Schools grant from the Florida Department of Education to address the high STI rate in the county, at that time #2 in the state. Through parent engagement centered in the elementary school, the awareness generated reached a level that initiated a behavior shift, dropping the county's STI rate to #41.

Building Awareness

The committee participated in the FDOH “Stomp Out Syphilis” Coalition Launch meeting, along with 70 other community members. The CSWG will share the location of mobile testing units on its Facebook page and is partnering with the coalition on awareness strategies.

Jane Johnson (CSWG) spoke on an expert panel for a WFSU Perspectives show on STIs, and the committee met with Jennie Brock of WellCare Health Plans and Liz Joyner of Village Square to explore opportunities for partnering to raise awareness of STIs and sexual health.

MEMBERS



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COMMITTEE CHAIR



Rebekah Dorn, PhD



Khari James, Esq.



Barbby Moro



Janel Robinson



Darby Kerrigan Scott, Esq.

VIOLENCE AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The committee met monthly during this commission year, beginning in October 2018. Following a review of the previous year's work and goals of the committee, the commissioners decided to continue the Community Conversations with service providers to explore ways to combat violence against women and girls. Additionally, in response to recent local and national tragedies motivated by violence against women, the committee compiled strategies for addressing gender-based microaggressions to raise public awareness of the continuum of violence and to support early intervention. Local data included below is taken from the Unified Crime Reports published by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence are Serious Threats to Women Worldwide

- According to data from the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ), 85% of domestic violence victims in the U.S. are female, and women are more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner.
- Of the 10 million people abused by an intimate partner each year in the U.S., women 18-24 are the most common demographic (USDOJ).
- Only 34% of people who are injured by an intimate partner seek medical care for their injuries (USDOJ).
- In 2018, there were 1,610 reports of domestic violence in Leon County. A total of 498 arrests resulted, or 31%.
- Domestic violence accounted for 12% of violent crime in Leon County in 2018.
- The domestic violence rate for Leon County, while at a five-year low in 2018, is higher than ten years ago, trending upward over the decade. This is true for forcible sex offenses as well.
- The 2018 domestic violence rate for Leon County (550.7) is higher than the state average (503.4).
- In 2018, there were 251 reports of rape in Leon County, up 3.7% from 2017 and a five-year high.
- According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, 3 out of 4 sexual assaults go unreported. Only 20% of female college-age students and 32% of female college aged non-students report incidents of sexual assault.
- According to a 2018 United Nations report, 58% of the 87,000 women killed worldwide in 2017 were victims of domestic or family violence. Women in the Americas and Africa are most at risk.

Learning From Service Providers

The committee held a series of community conversations and workshops to bring together program managers and directors of local organizations serving women and girls experiencing violence. The idea was born out of the #MeToo Community Conversation organized by CSWG last year, which drew a large number of local service providers eager to collaborate and support one another in their work. The committee partnered with United Partners for Human Services (UPHS) in hosting the event series, which was open to local organizations serving women and girls.

Committee members Rebekah Dorn and Darby Kerrigan Scott chaired the first event in February. Lashawn Gordon, then-Program Director of PACE Center for Girls (Leon County), skillfully led the program, which featured breakout small group discussions and a full group discussion of key takeaways and next steps.

Attendees noted the need for victim advocates in the school system, media training for news reporters in appropriate portrayal of women and girls, public school curriculum that addresses social development, parent education regarding effective and healthy discipline strategies and available community resources.

The next event was held as a workshop offered at the United Partners for Human Services annual conference. Attendees discussed community perception and the silencing of violence against women and girls, the need for resource coordination among service providers, lack of perpetrator accountability and the normalizing of violent behavior, survivor needs overwhelming available resources, and the need for community ownership of the issues.

The conference event resulted in the formation of a steering committee—including Refuge House, The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, Pace Center for Girls, and Turn About—to plan future meetings and trainings for service providers. The first training will focus on the establishment and maintenance of professional boundaries to support the longevity of service providers in the field. The training will include a survey of attendees to help determine topics for future trainings and collaborative events.

Calling Attention to the Continuum of Violence

In response to the horrific loss of life by violence targeting women this commission year, the committee worked to call attention to the precursors of tragedy that are often disregarded or dismissed as inconsequential. Grounding “rape culture,” the acceptance of sexual violence, in personal behaviors and placing actions and inactions along a community-wide continuum of violence, the committee developed a list of tips for recognizing and



addressing microaggressions, or subtle forms of discrimination against a marginalized group. The list comes from secondary research of existing tools as well as recurring issues identified by service providers attending listening sessions organized by the committee.

In speaking about the Ten Tips for Addressing Microaggressions, included on page 16, committee members note that the inexcusable sexual abuse and rape culture is not something that suddenly occurs. It is bred in a culture that starts with microaggressions such as catcalling or locker room banter. The list of tips identifies implicit bias, victim shaming, toxic masculinity, consent, and courage to initiate difficult discussions.

Personal behaviors can contribute to or mitigate violence in our community. The committee’s work this year puts the responsibility on each resident of Tallahassee-Leon County community to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls. The harm in passively excusing these small acts or derogatory comments is that it leads towards more damaging and dangerous extreme behaviors on the continuum of violence.



Tolerance of the behaviors at the bottom supports or excuses those higher up. To change outcomes, we must change the culture.

If you see something, say something!
Start the conversation today.

www.11thPrincipleConsent.org

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE CONTENT

Ten Tips for Addressing Microaggressions at Home, Work, and School

While it is common for people to feel that not much can be done individually to stop sexual abuse and violence, everyone can advocate for respectful behavior. Employ the following tips to reduce the incidence and escalation of violence against women in our community.

01 TAKE THE IMPLICIT BIAS TEST	Understand your biases by taking the evidence-based test from Harvard. Consider the changes needed to ensure you're not contributing to toxic behavior.	06 PLACE BLAME WHERE IT BELONGS	When an adult has sex with a minor, it is rape. A child cannot consent and is not responsible for an adult's behavior.
02 CONSIDER THE EFFECTS OF TOXIC MASCULINITY	Watch the Gillette TV ad and have a talk with your family, friends, and colleagues about expectations of men's behavior.	07 DON'T EXCUSE BAD BEHAVIOR	Hold men and boys accountable when they do not treat women and girls with respect. Set a higher standard and better example of acceptable behavior.
03 ATTEND GREEN DOT TRAINING	Attend a bystander training hosted by FSU that empowers students, staff, and faculty to foster a community that does not tolerate violence.	08 HAVE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS	Allow children to engage in hard conversations. Encourage them to be brave and ask questions. Use evidence-based sources to find answers together.
04 KNOW COMMUNITY RESOURCES	Educate yourself about victims' rights and how to connect survivors of violence with area resources.	09 DON'T ASSUME CONSENT	What she wears and how she expresses herself is not an invitation to touch her or make sexual innuendos. Unless expressly given, do not assume consent.
05 BELIEVE SURVIVORS	When a person says she has been victimized, believe her. It is not easy to say. Get her the resources she needs without questioning her motives.	10 RESPECT HER CHOICE	No means no. When said, stop the act immediately. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, even after expressly given.

Tallahassee-Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, Violence and Safety Committee, 2018-2019

2019 Women's Economic Security Summit Steering Committee Members

Amber R. Tynan, CSWG, Summit Chair	Dr. Rebekah Dorn, CSWG, Hospitality Chair	Samantha Vance, CSWG, Speakers & Logistics Chair	Dr. Cicely Walker Brantley, CSWG, Marketing & Communications Chair	Dr. Gwendolyn Singleton, CSWG, Education & Economic Security Chair
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Josie Fliger, Elder Care Services	Keith Bowers, FAMU Small Business Development Center	Kim Moore, Tallahassee Community College	Kelly Otte, PACE Center for Girls Leon	Kelly Sciba, Florida Commission on the Status of Women
Leslie Powell-Boudreaux, Legal Services of North Florida	Nicole Granger, FMB Bank	Patty Ballantine, Care Point Health & Wellness	Robin Hassler Thompson, Survive & Thrive Advocacy Center	Shelly Bell, Lively Technical College
Dr. Susan Fiorito, FSU / Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship	Talethia Edwards, Greater Bond Neighborhood Association	Tiffany Hamilton, Hamilton Realty Advisors	Tim Center, Capital Area Community Action Agency	Tony Carvajal, Florida Chamber Foundation

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

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- Florida Department of Law Enforcement Domestic Violence Statistics: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/FSAC/Data-Statistics/UCR-Domestic-Violence.aspx>
- Florida’s Sexual Health Education Community Toolkit, Florida Department of Education: http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5411/urlt/ToolKitF_4web.pdf
- Harvard Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- “Our Incel Problem,” Vox: <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/4/16/18287446/incel-definition-reddit>
- “Shareholder Value is no Longer Everything, Top CEOs Say,” The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/19/business/business-roundtable-ceos-corporations.html>
- State-Level Progress in Reducing the Black-White Infant Mortality Gap, United States, 1999-2013, American Journal of Public Health: <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2017.303689>
- “We Believe: The Best Men Can Be,” Gillette Short Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0>



CSWG

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

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