

DELAWARE WOMEN

STATUS REPORT



**WOMEN'S
ADVANCEMENT
& ADVOCACY**



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September 2024



Acknowledgements

The Office of Women’s Advancement and Advocacy (OWAA) would like to thank Governor John Carney and his administration for their support and commitment to advancing the status of women in Delaware. Their dedication to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment has been instrumental in driving the progress outlined in this report.

We also extend our appreciation to Secretary Claire DeMatteis, of the Delaware Department of Human Resources, for her exemplary leadership and guidance in the completion of this report. Additionally, the State of Delaware’s Government Information Center, in particular the expertise of graphic designer Karen Katz, were crucial partners in bringing OWAA’s vision for this report to fruition. We thank them for their guidance, input, and assistance in creating this report.

Our heartfelt gratitude also goes to the numerous women's organizations in Delaware whose tireless work and unwavering commitment have significantly advanced the well-being and empowerment of women and girls across the state. Thank you for your relentless advocacy, innovative programs, and the countless hours of hard work you devote to making Delaware a better place for all women and girls.

Executive Summary

The Office of Women’s Advancement & Advocacy (OWAA) was established in the fall of 2017, when House Bill 4 (HB 4) of the 149th General Assembly was enacted and signed into law by Delaware Governor John Carney. OWAA was created as a division of the Delaware Department of Human Resources (DHR) with the purpose of promoting the equality and equity of Delaware women in all areas of society. Responsible for overseeing women's rights work, including evaluating current women's rights legislation, building support for new legislation, and advising the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Secretary of the DHR on women’s issues throughout our state, OWAA plays a vital role for advocating for women in Delaware. OWAA also serves as a clearinghouse of information, providing research and technical assistance, as well as publishing regular reports highlighting issues that impact Delaware women. More specifically, OWAA is charged with the following reporting responsibilities:

- Serve as a clearinghouse by providing information on the status of Delaware women to the public, state agencies, the General Assembly, the Judiciary, organizations, businesses, and institutions, and when necessary, to refer complaints and inquiries to the appropriate state departments or agencies or community organizations when necessary.
- Study, review, and report on the status of women in the State. To accomplish this task, the Office of Women’s Advancement and Advocacy may conduct research projects and focus groups, and hold public hearings, forums, and discussion groups as it deems necessary.
- Compile and analyze statistics and information and issue reports on issues affecting women in this state.

OWAA hopes the following data will be used by decisionmakers, policymakers, philanthropists, state agencies and nonprofits working in our communities to help inform and support their work to improve outcomes for Delaware women and girls. It is OWAA's intention for this report to serve as a baseline for the overall status of Delaware women, with the goal of updating this report biennially to establish trends, elevate successes, and shine a light on disparities. Additionally, while the following report shares a small set of data indicators, OWAA is also a resource, available to provide technical assistance in locating additional data and data resources not included in this report.

In this first report, the data show most Delaware women are insured and accessing healthcare when they need it. Delaware's maternal and infant mortality rates also continue to improve. However, Delaware women are more likely to be living in poverty than men, and the gender wage gap persists in our state. There also are racial/ethnic disparities across datasets, indicating the intersectionality of the overarching and systems-level issues that continue to impact Delaware women of color. OWAA will continue to track these indicators and raise awareness to how Delaware women and girls are faring in our state.

By focusing on these indicators, we highlight the challenges, opportunities, and contributions of Delaware women, laying the groundwork for informed strategies and initiatives to foster their continued empowerment and advancement within the state.

The data included in this report comes primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing survey that reports both 1-year and 5-year estimates on a wide variety of indicators. Given Delaware's small size, this report uses 5-year estimates, as they can provide a more accurate overall view of our state and removes any outliers that may affect one-year estimates. Other national data sources that provide data on Delaware highlighted in this report include KFF State Health Facts and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. OWAA also utilized a variety of state resources including the Delaware Health Statistics Center, the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, Rodel, and the annual reports of a variety of Delaware agencies and organizations. The timeframe for each dataset may vary from source to source depending on the timeline of each survey. OWAA has included the most recent data available from each source. As part of our analysis, we also include breakdowns by race/ethnicity of the status of Delaware women wherever possible.



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