

DELAWARE WOMEN'S VOICES



SURVEY REPORT

November 2020



Between October 31, 2019 and January 31, 2020, the Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy (OWAA), with support from the Delaware Commission for Women, Delaware Women's Workforce Council and several community partner organizations, conducted the Delaware Women's Voices Survey to provide the women of our state with a mechanism for sharing their perspectives on the most pressing issues affecting their communities and their own well-being. Responses from the 801 Delaware women who participated in the survey will help guide OWAA perspectives and programs moving forward. Our hope is that the survey results also serve as a resource to help nonprofit, community, philanthropy and government entities develop and strengthen supports that can help women and girls in Delaware. The survey was conducted in partnership with the National Association of Commissions for Women as part of the Voices of Women in America (VoWA) Initiative. Key findings follow.

ISSUES FACING DELAWARE WOMEN

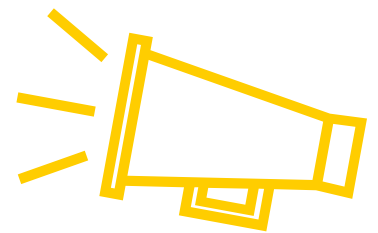
Delaware women identified the following as the most critical issues facing women in their communities:



- **Access to quality, affordable childcare (42%)**
- **Balancing the demands of work and family (18%)**
- **Access to counseling services (11%)**
- **Caring for aging parents/relatives (7%)**
- **Access to training and help finding a job (5%)**

Delaware women identified the following as the biggest challenges faced personally or by a member of their household:

- **Balancing the demands of work and family (28%)**
- **Caring for aging parents/relatives (13%)**
- **Access to counseling services (10%)**
- **Access to quality, affordable childcare (9%)**
- **Too few women in leadership positions (5%)**



BARRIERS TO ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES

When asked about any potential barriers that may prevent women in Delaware from getting help for these issues, survey respondents identified the following impediments:

- Lack of awareness with respect to available support services (66%)
- Finances (12%)
- Not knowing how to access services (10%)
- Personal hesitation in asking for help (7%)

• *When asked about government responsiveness, more than half of women who participated in the survey see state (58%) and local (51%) government as somewhat-to-extremely responsive when it comes to addressing the needs of Delaware women. However, a significant number feel that state and local has not been responsive (31% and 34%, respectively).*

KEY ANECDOTES

The survey provided the opportunity for Delaware women to share the specific changes they see as necessary at both at the local or state level in Delaware. While there were hundreds of responses, several themes emerged as those most vital in helping Delaware women. Survey respondents most frequently cited the following as the issues that most needed to be addressed in order to help Delaware women:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

ACCESS TO PAID LEAVE

TRANSPORTATION

BETTER COMMUNICATION ABOUT, AND ACCESS TO, SERVICES

HIGHER WAGES AND FINANCIAL LITERACY

EQUALITY IN ALL RESPECTS INCLUDING IN THE WORKPLACE, WAGES, REPRESENTATION, AND DECISIONMAKING.

Delaware women were also asked if there was anything else about themselves, their challenges, or the challenges of other women or girls in their community that they'd like to share. The following are just a few thoughts shared by Delaware women:

"Allow women of color to have equal promotional opportunities and pay within our state government. A seat at the table making policy decisions that affect our families and community."

"If we value the work of women and accommodate needs of family life and work life, as well as easier return-to-work positions after women have taken time off for birth or childcare needs, all of us will be better off."

"I personally struggle with feeling heard in the workplace. 90% of our leadership positions held by men and supervisory/management positions are also men. There isn't a clear pathway to obtain permanent full-time employment and there's a general feeling that keeping year-round "senior staff" employees as "seasonal casual" in order to avoid providing healthcare, sick days or comp time is acceptable. Delaware is losing A LOT of talent (particularly young educated women) that way."

THE VOICES OF DELAWARE WOMEN

"Financial barriers for many looking to compete advanced degrees or certifications. Due to the staggering costs many women become complacent in their current roles because of the fear of adding financial and other stressors to their family."

"I live in a relatively wealthy community but am surrounded by poverty and hunger. These are the working poor. When it takes 2 hours to get to work by bus and costs your entire paycheck to pay rent you can't meet your basic needs."

"Many women stay in an unhappy relationship many times as just a way for survival. Hard to feel empowered and independent when you can't get your head above water without relying on someone else. It's not impossible, just extremely difficult."

"More inclusive services for the LGBTQ+ community; flying a rainbow flag doesn't equal inclusive language in services or on websites/brochures/materials. More state financial support for programs that serve victims of crime, especially domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse."

"Women and girls need safe spaces to come together and grow. There is a lack of attention and sensitivity to the experiences that women face."

"The overall culture still discounts and discredits women's stories and women's experiences."



DELAWARE WOMEN'S VOICES-BY THE NUMBERS

Who Took the Survey?

DELAWARE TOTAL **801**

New Castle County 543

Kent County 104

Sussex County 102

*unknown 52

AGE

Under 35 142

36-55 320

56-75 302

Over 76 35

*unknown 2

RACE/ETHNICITY

White 579

Black 112

Hispanic 22

More Than One Race 25

All Others 10

Preferred Not to Answer 30

*unknown 23

DELAWARE WOMEN'S VOICES-BY THE NUMBERS

Who Took the Survey?

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

Single	131
Married	485
Living w/Partner	51
Separated	12
Divorced	94
Widowed	22

*unknown 6

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Straight	676
Gay	28
Bisexual	33
Prefer Not to Answer	46
Other	3

*unknown 15

ARMED FORCES/VETERAN STATUS

Yes	21
No	778

*unknown 2

DELAWARE WOMEN'S VOICES-BY THE NUMBERS

Who Took the Survey?

EDUCATION

High School Diploma	25
Some College	80
Associate's Degree	47
Bachelor's Degree	223
Advanced Degree	411
Technical License	5

*unknown 10

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employed Full time	457
Employed Part time	77
Self-employed	52
Not Employed/Not Looking	6
Not Employed/Looking for Work	15
Stay-At-Home Parent	16
Student	9
Disabled	10
Retired	153

*unknown 6

DELAWARE WOMEN'S VOICES-BY THE NUMBERS

Who Took the Survey?

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Under \$35,000	85
Between \$36K and \$55K	96
Between \$56K and \$100K	228
Over \$100K	283

*unknown 109

HOUSING STATUS

Own Home/Apartment	621
Rent Home/Apartment	117
Living w/Family or Friends	40
Homeless	4
Other	12

*unknown 7

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Living Alone	122
Living w/Spouse or Partner	294
Living w/Spouse or Partner+Kids	232
Living w/Kids	50
Living w/Parents	25
Other	66

*unknown 12

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Thank you to the Delaware women
that provided input & our community
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survey.

Delaware Women's Commission
Delaware Women's Workforce Council
AAUW Newark Branch
Delaware ERANow/Ready to Run
Fund for Women
Girls Inc. of Delaware
Meet Me at the Well
National Association of Commissions for Women
The Junior League of Wilmington, DE
United Way of Delaware
Wilmington Chapter of Hadassah
Women's March Sussex-DE
YWCA Delaware