



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# The Power of Participation

Women's Voting and Civic Engagement in New York City

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As Women Creating Change (WCC) celebrates 110 years of advancing women's civic and political participation, this report examines the state of women's democratic engagement in New York City, the barriers they face, and the policies needed to expand participation.

Civic engagement extends beyond voting to include grassroots organizing, mutual aid, advocacy, and leadership in local communities. This report comes at a pivotal moment—when issues of gender equity, economic security, and democratic participation are at the forefront of policymaking.

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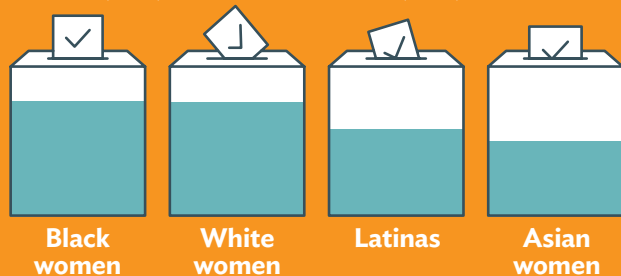


## KEY FINDINGS

### Women's Voting Trends

- ▶ Women in New York City consistently outvote men, with a 69%-to-64% turnout gap in 2022 and a 2-to-5-percentage-point gap every election year since 1994. (These voting data refer to a pooled three-year average of 2018, 2020, and 2022.)
- ▶ Voting rates increase consistently in higher-income households, though the largest gap separates women in households earning less than \$50,000 from those in households earning more than this threshold, suggesting that the lowest earners faced greater difficulties voting.

Among women, Black women have the highest voter turnout (77%), followed by white women (76%), Latinas (58%), and Asian women (50%).

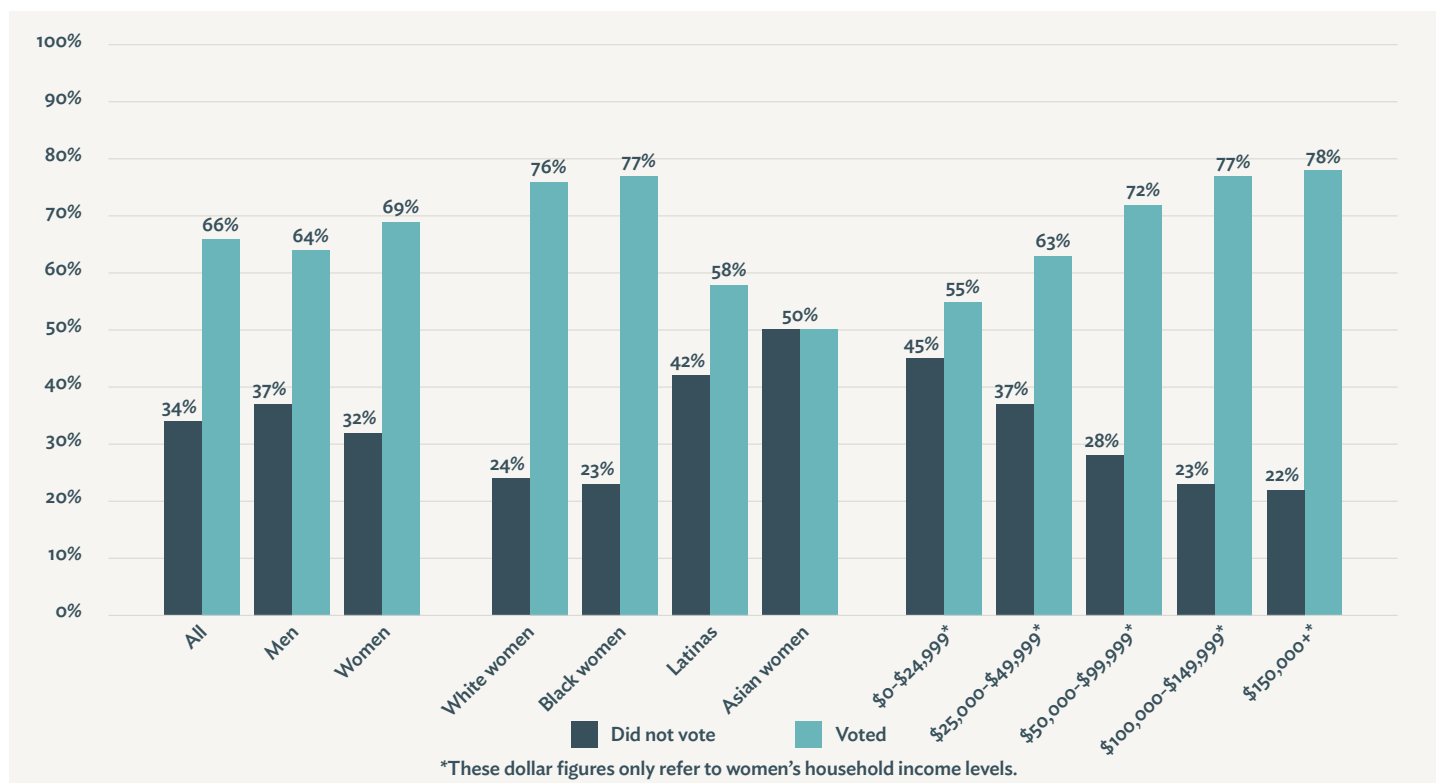


### Voting and Registration Barriers

Voters report a range of reasons why they did not register to vote. Women are less likely than men to say they are not interested in the election or in politics (26%, compared with 31% of men). Data underscore the importance of physical infrastructure, like polling places and schools, for low-income women and that greater informational campaigns could help voters overcome obstacles.

- ▶ Women in lower-income households are more likely to cast their ballots on Election Day (72%, compared with 61% of those in households earning \$100,000 or more annually). Additionally, three-quarters of Latinas said they voted in person.
- ▶ Women of color are more likely to register at polling places, schools, or hospitals, underscoring the importance of trusted, community-based access points.
- ▶ Nearly 40% of Black women who did not register to vote said they had missed the registration deadline, while Latinas and Asian women were more likely to report confusion about where or how to register.
- ▶ Caregiving remains a major barrier to voting for women, with 21% of women citing illness or care work as reasons for not voting, nearly twice the rate of men.

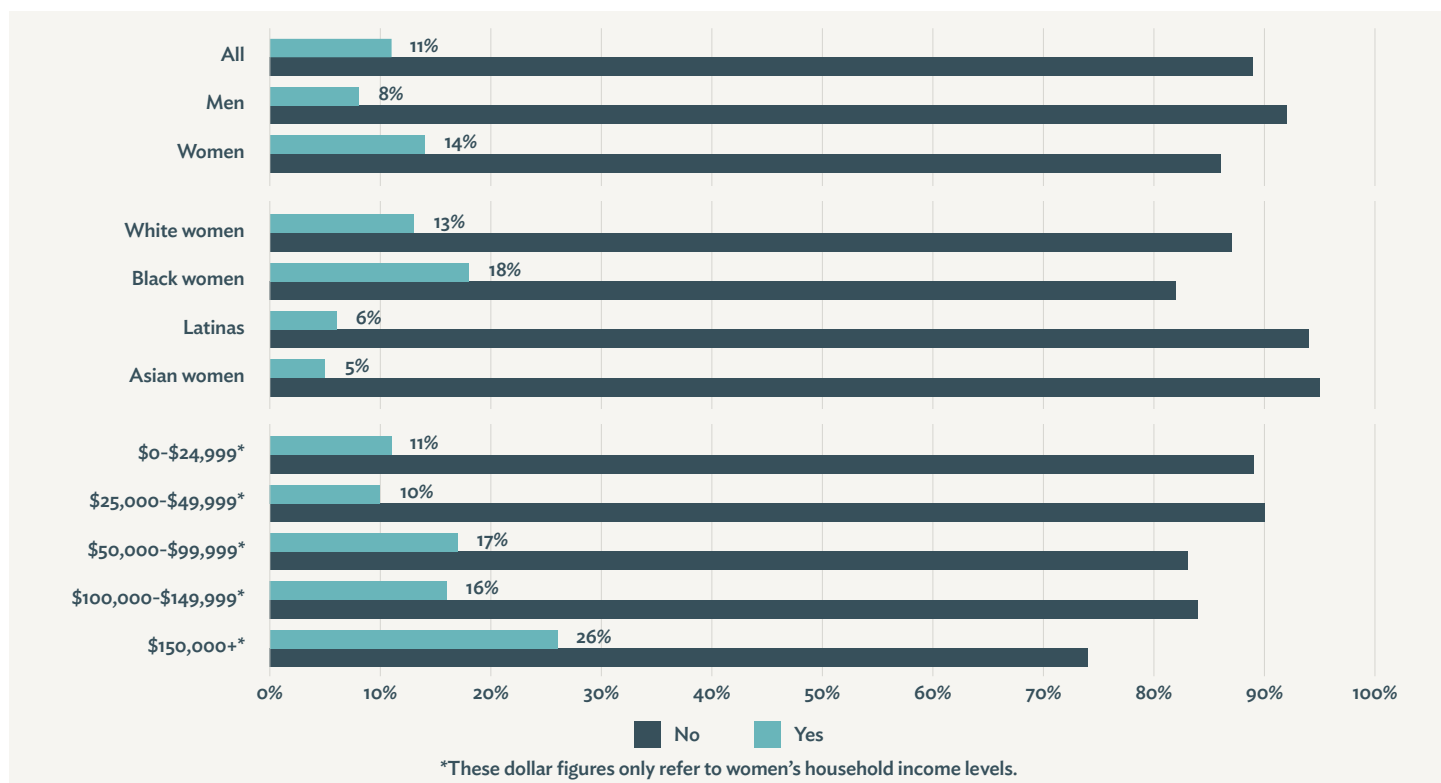
### Voting Rates in New York City by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Household Income



## Civic Engagement and Leadership

- ▶ Schools and community organizations are critical parts of civic life, often serving as hubs for neighborhood engagement. Participation in neighborhood, school, or community groups is one of the most common forms of civic engagement, with 11% of all New Yorkers and 14% of women reporting involvement and Black women (18%) reporting the highest involvement.
- ▶ Formal civic participation (such as membership in advocacy groups, religious organizations, philanthropic clubs, or professional organizations with social or civic aims) is lower, with only 5% of women reporting they have served as a leader in a local organization. Participation is highest among Black women (6%), and white women (5%), and lower among Asian women (1%) and Latinas (1%). Like other forms of civic engagement, participation in leadership roles increases with income, topping out at 15% among women in households earning \$150,000 or more annually.
- ▶ Women are more likely than men to volunteer (20% vs. 17%), with participation increasing among higher-income households.
- ▶ Women are more likely to participate in informal community networks, through talking with their neighbors, speaking regularly with friends and family, offering or receiving help from neighbors, and discussing politics at home.
- ▶ Women are also more likely than men to say they have engaged in consumer activism by boycotting or buying a product based on a company's social or political stances (15% vs. 10%).

### New Yorkers' Participation in School, Neighborhood, or Community Organization by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Household Income



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Addressing Barriers and Expanding Women's Civic Participation

Women in New York City are already leading community activism, advocacy, and civic life despite systemic barriers. Expanding economic equity, civic education, and voting access is essential to building a stronger, more representative democracy for all. To address barriers and expand women's participation, WCC recommends the following:

1. **Align New York City's local elections with federal-election years.**



2. **Implement same-day voter registration and multilingual outreach.**



3. **Resource women-led solutions.**



4. **Invest in civic education and youth-engagement programs.**



5. **Implement policies such as paid family leave, flexible work schedules, and accessible early-voting options to help alleviate the barriers women face because of caregiving responsibilities.**



6. **Restore minimum-wage purchasing power by indexing the minimum wage to match rising labor productivity and increasing costs of living. Women and workers of color stand to benefit most from minimum-wage adjustments.**



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