

State of NYC Women Conference 2026

Women Leading NYC Forward

8:30 AM	**Check-In, Breakfast & Networking** Freshly baked breakfast featuring bagels, pastries, fruit, and beverages
9:15 AM	**Opening Remarks** • *Sharon Sewell-Fairman, President & CEO, Women Creating Change (WCC)* • *ShehilaRae Stephens, Executive Vice President of Economic Mobility and Social Impact, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)* • *Gale Brewer, Council Member, City of New York* • *Michelle A. Henry, East Region Executive, Corporate Responsibility, JPMorganChase* **Legacy of Leadership Award** • *Ana L. Oliveira, President & CEO, The New York Women's Foundation* **Event MC:** *Tirza Barnes, Leadership and People Development Consultant, Tirza Motivates*
9:30 AM	**Introduction** • *Penny Cagan, Senior Risk Advisor and Educator, WCC Board Chair* **Visionary Keynote** • *Keesha Gaskins-Nathan, Director, Democratic Practice Program, Rockefeller Brothers Fund*
9:45 AM	**Beyond Access: Translating Good Policy into Good Practice** New York has made significant investments in childcare, guaranteed income, and economic supports, yet many women continue to struggle to achieve economic stability. Benefit cliffs, housing costs, caregiving responsibilities, and fragmented systems often mean that policy victories fail to translate into everyday security. This conversation explores why implementation matters as much as legislation and what it will take to build an economy designed around how women live and work. **Testimony:** • *Stephanie Unuero* **Moderator:** • *Seher Khawaja, National Economic Justice Director, Equal Pay Today, Equal Rights Advocates* **Panelists:** • *Senator. Liz Krueger, New York State Senate* • *Grace C. Bonilla, Esq., President and CEO of United Way of New York City* • *Gregory J Morris, Chief Executive Officer, NYC Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC)*

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10:35 AM	**Climate, Community & Care: Building Equitable Solutions for a Changing World** New York is helping shape the nation's transition to a clean energy economy. Yet decisions about renewable energy, data centers, transportation, and climate infrastructure raise difficult questions about the uneven impacts of climate change and the policies designed to address it. This session explores how we can create climate solutions that expand opportunity, reduce environmental burdens, and ensure women and gender-expansive New Yorkers help shape, and benefit from, the future of a greener, more resilient city. **Moderator:** • *Laura Edidin, Senior Vice President of Programs and Partnerships, Women Creating Change (WCC)* **Panelist:** • *Peggy Shepard, Co-Founder and Executive Director, WE ACT for Environmental Justice* • *Barbara E. Brown, Chairperson of Board of Directors, Eastern Queens Alliance, Inc.* • *Priya Mulgaonkar, Director of Green Co-op Council, a project of Spring Street Climate Fund*
11:25 AM	**Break & Networking** Fresh fruit, granola bars, trail mix, and beverages
11:40 AM	**The Next Chapter of Health Justice: Protecting Access in an Era of Change** As New York continues to position itself as a national leader on reproductive rights and gender-affirming care, significant gaps in access and infrastructure remain. Federal policy shifts, provider shortages, misinformation, and persistent inequities continue to leave many communities behind—including immigrant women, incarcerated mothers, and LGBTQ+ youth and families. This conversation examines where progress has been made, where vulnerabilities persist, and what bold action is needed to ensure that all women and gender-expansive New Yorkers can access safe, evidence-based, and affordable care throughout their lives. **Moderator:** • *Rosemonde Pierre-Louis, Executive Director, McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research, New York University* **Panelists:** • *Lourdes A. Rivera, President, Pregnancy Justice* • *Dr. Alethea Taylor, Executive Director, Hour Children* • *Dr. Ann-Gel Palermo, DrPH, MPH, TIPC, ACC, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Community and Culture, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai*
12:30 PM	**Lunch & Networking** Assorted artisan sandwiches, salads and hot dishes
1:45 PM	**Digital Harm, Real Consequences: Defending Women in the Age of Online Violence** From doxing and phishing to non-consensual intimate images and AI-generated abuse, technology is creating new forms of gender-based violence that silence women and undermine democracy. Around the world and increasingly here at home, women in leadership are disproportionately targeted for speaking out and participating in public life. This session examines how technology-facilitated abuse threatens safety, civic participation, and democratic representation—and what policymakers, technology companies, and communities can do to respond. **Moderator:** • *Ane Mathieson, Director of Policy & Advocacy, Women Creating Change (WCC)* **Panelists:** • *Dr. Taveeshi Gupta, Senior Director of Research, Evaluation and Learning, Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice* • *Sherry Hakimi, Co-Founder & CEO, Pirth.org*

2:35 PM	**Bridging Generations: Building New York's Future Together** As New York navigates a time of change and uncertainty, this intergenerational fireside chat brings together a New York leader and an emerging youth advocate to explore the decisions shaping the future for women and families. Together, they will discuss how leaders across generations can build trust, expand opportunity, and create a more equitable and resilient New York. **Moderator:** • *Nathifa Forde, Founding Executive Director, NYC Her Future* **Panelists:** • *Nathali Feliz, Inspiring Futures* • *Xzayla Wilson, PACE University* • *Krysanju Max-Macarthy, Bishop Loughlin High School*
3:00 PM	**Break & Networking** Fresh fruit, granola bars, trail mix, and beverages.
3:15 PM	**Pathways to Political Power: Women's Leadership in New York City** Women are shaping New York City's future through elected office, public service, advocacy, and nonprofit leadership. This panel brings together influential women leaders to discuss the different paths they took to positions of political leadership, the barriers they encountered, and the lessons they've learned along the way. The conversation will draw on new research from Amplify Her Foundation and Women Creating Change. **Moderator:** • *Aamina Awan-Khan, Co-Chair, Amplify Her Leadership Network* **Panelists:** • *Afua Atta-Mensah, NYC Chief Equity Officer & Commissioner, City of New York* • *Amanda Septimo, New York State Assemblymember* • *Pierina Sanchez, Council Member, City of New York*
3:55 PM	**Beyond the Conversation: Building Systems That Work for Women** Throughout the day, we've explored bold ideas, promising policies, and community-driven solutions to the challenges facing women and gender-expansive New Yorkers. This closing conversation brings together leaders from government, business, philanthropy, nonprofits, academia, and grassroots organizations to identify what's next. Drawing on innovative approaches from New York and around the world, panelists will explore how cross-sector collaboration, shared accountability, and new ways of thinking can turn today's conversations into lasting systems change. **Moderator:** • *Sabrina Stratton, Senior Vice President, Northeast Regional Director, Amalgamated Bank* **Panelists:** • *Diana Franco, Senior Vice President, Economic Mobility and Social Impact, Women.NYC, NYCEDC* • *L. Joy Williams, President, NAACP New York State Conference* • *Grace Rauh, Executive Director, Citizens Union* • *Jahmila Edwards, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, NYC Office of the Mayor*
4:35PM	**Amplify Her Foundation Glassbreaker Award** Honoring Gloria Steinem, Writer, Activist, Feminist Organizer • *Chantal Bonitto from Amplify Her Foundation's Leadership Network* • *Amy Richards, Board Member, Gloria's Foundation will be accepting the award in Gloria Steinem's honor.*
4:45PM	**Closing Remarks**
4:50 PM – 6:00 PM	**Networking Reception** All attendees are welcome to stay for drinks and bites.