



# A BLUEPRINT FOR WOMEN'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN NEW YORK CITY

Toward a More Just and  
Equitable Democracy

June 15, 2021

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WCC is indebted to countless women activists, writers, thinkers, and scholars, particularly Black, Brown, immigrant, and LGBTQ women, and gender nonconforming and non-binary individuals. This paper builds upon lessons learned from the women, past and present, who found ways to be civically engaged despite the barriers. We are also grateful to Kimberlé Crenshaw and Cathy Cohen, whose work directly inspired and shaped the development of this publication. WCC is honored to have this platform and we are committed to practicing our values of equity and justice, inclusivity and intersectionality, accountability and transparency, and learning and listening.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, a record number of women are running for office, Kamala Harris has become our country's first woman—and first Black and South Asian woman—to become Vice President, and Stacey Abrams and activists across the United States are transforming voter engagement and standing up for equal rights. We are at an important moment in our country's history, as we confront a devastating pandemic and bear witness to the consequences of systemic<sup>2</sup> racism and social injustice. While a change in leadership at the federal, state, and city levels will not solve our most fundamental problems, it offers potential and promise.

In New York City, a majority of City Council seats (39) will open up at the end of 2021, which is both a great opportunity and a risk for women's representation in the Council. While election results will determine the gender breakdown of these offices, the level of interest illustrates that women are determined to engage civically and serve in public office.

Possibilities for women in this country abound. Yet the promise of the possible requires all of us to invest in the futures of women who seek to run for office, become civically engaged, or yield changes in their communities and in society at large. Even with a record number of women seeking elected office, women are underrepresented at every level of government and confront harmful gender stereotypes and other barriers to participation on a daily basis. Our country is also witnessing the steepest number of hate crimes in more than a decade, a disheartening trend that has not eluded New York City.<sup>3</sup>

**Women Creating Change (WCC) is committed to expanding women's civic engagement to bring about a more just and equitable city. The purpose of this document is to understand how social and economic inequities shape women's political participation, to inform WCC's programmatic and policy priorities, and to urge our partners (past, current, and future) in the nonprofit, public, and private sectors to join us in our mission to foster women's civic engagement and build a more equitable New York City.**

The paper aggregates research and data from WCC's internal strategic planning process, a literature review, and developmental evaluation<sup>4</sup> led by Dr. Julie Poncelet of the Action Evaluation Collaborative and the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs.

Why WCC, and why now? WCC was founded in 1915 as the Women's City Club of New York, by predominantly wealthy white women, to bring together women who were interested in improving New York and to collectively promote the well-being of the city. For more than a century, WCC's volunteer members advocated for pressing issues of the day, including labor rights, children's rights, health and housing, public education, environmental justice, and literacy. After a notable history of advocacy for civic issues in New York City, WCC's membership and impact plateaued early in the 21st century. In 2018, aspiring to overhaul its vision and mission, WCC evolved to become a more inclusive organization focused on the needs of women in our city and not on our membership.

After an extensive strategic planning and research process, WCC embarked on this new path, changing its vision, mission, and name. The goal is to shift power to women who have been excluded from full civic participation: Black, Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic, Latinx, low-income, immigrant, LGBTQ, disabled, incarcerated, primary caregivers, wage workers, and gender non-conforming or non-binary individuals. We believe everyone should have the knowledge, resources, and connections to advocate for stronger communities, for improved quality of life, and for better democracy. This paper is an acknowledgement that we as a city and an organization have much work ahead if we want to make a lasting, positive impact.

**WCC defines “civic engagement” as the set of behaviors, attitudes, and actions related to participation in one’s community in pursuit of equity, accountability, wellness, and justice. The outcome of improved civic engagement is a democracy that meets everyone’s basic needs and ensures all community members have the power, tools, and skills to participate in collective decision-making.**

WCC’s research over the past two years found that many women are civically engaged, but they often experience barriers to civic participation as a result of fundamental societal inequities and oppression. The exclusion of women, particularly those from low-income and under-resourced neighborhoods, from civic processes is historically linked to larger systemic barriers such as racism, classism, and sexism. As a result, women regularly encounter barriers to civic engagement including:

- Burden of work and care
- Gendered stereotypes
- Lack of civic education
- Political exclusion
- Protest suppression
- Inadequate funding

**In response to barriers to civic engagement, this paper offers recommendations to help chart a path for collective action (see Table 1). WCC recommends solutions for:**

### **Nonprofits (Including WCC) and Community Organizations:**

Expand civic education programs, account for time, energy, and financial constraints in programs and engagement opportunities, provide culturally specific and widely accessible materials, incorporate an expansive definition of civic engagement into programs and policies, build mutually supportive partnerships, foster more opportunities for women to build relationships and leadership skills, and build a repository of information, tools, and actionable civic engagement opportunities in New York City.

### **Government:**

Expand voting access and rights, improve the city’s election infrastructure and voter data analysis, ensure a fair and accurate U.S. Census and redistricting process, end policing practices like “kettling” that deliberately entrap protestors, increase funding for, and coordination of, civic learning and education opportunities for families and adults, improve government initiatives that aim to expand public participation, and give community boards a greater voice.

### **Foundations and Private Sector:**

Direct more resources to organizations implementing inclusive civic engagement programming, those that conduct work through an intersectional lens, organizations of color and multi-year initiatives, and CBOs focused on movement building.

**TABLE 1: SYSTEMIC BARRIERS AND PROGRAM AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Systemic Barriers	Program and Policy Recommendations
<p><b>Burden of Work and Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Wages</li> <li>• Time Constraints</li> </ul> <p><b>Gendered Stereotypes</b></p> <p><b>Lack of Civic Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult and family civic education</li> <li>• Culturally responsive content</li> </ul> <p><b>Political Exclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Census undercount</li> <li>• Partisan and racial redistricting</li> <li>• Restrictive election and voting laws</li> <li>• Underfunded and inefficient local election administration</li> <li>• Government accountability and accessibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Protest Suppression</b></p> <p><b>Inadequate Funding</b></p>	<p><b>1. Nonprofits and Community Organizations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Expand and create youth, adult, and intergenerational civic education programs that develop women’s skills and knowledge</li> <li>1.2 Account for caregiving, time, energy, and financial constraints in programs and engagement opportunities</li> <li>1.3 Provide culturally specific and widely accessible materials that meet diverse backgrounds, needs, and abilities</li> <li>1.4 Build mutually supportive partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs), civic engagement-focused organizations, and secondary learning institutions</li> <li>1.5 Incorporate an expansive definition of civic engagement into programs and policies</li> <li>1.6 Foster more opportunities for women to build relationships, community, confidence, and leadership skills</li> <li>1.7 Build a repository of information, tools, and actionable civic engagement opportunities in New York City</li> </ol> <p><b>2. Government:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Expand voting access and rights</li> <li>2.2 Fund and improve the city’s election infrastructure</li> <li>2.3 Improve voter data analysis: The New York City Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB) should conduct an intersectional analysis on voting rights data in the upcoming Voting Analysis Report</li> <li>2.4 Ensure a fair and accurate U.S. Census and redistricting process</li> <li>2.5 End policing practices like “kettling” that deliberately entrap protestors</li> <li>2.6 Increase local and statewide funding for, and coordination of, civic learning and education opportunities for families and adults</li> <li>2.7 Improve government initiatives that aim to expand public participation</li> <li>2.8 Give community boards a greater voice in advocating for the constituents and neighborhoods they represent</li> </ol> <p><b>3. Foundations and Private Sector:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Direct more funding to organizations implementing inclusive civic engagement programming and those that conduct work through an intersectional lens</li> <li>3.2 Fund organizations of color</li> <li>3.3 Fund multi-year initiatives and CBOs focused on movement building</li> <li>3.4 Establish complementary programs and services that support civic activities</li> </ol>

With the combined efforts of the nonprofit, philanthropy, private, and government sectors, we can advance the civic engagement of women toward the betterment of our city, our state, and our country. WCC will focus on collaborating with:

- CBOs (including faith-based institutions) that are led by the communities they represent
- Funders committed to racial justice, gender equity, and social justice
- Elected officials and government agencies committed to more equitable and just women’s civic engagement

- Advocacy coalitions focused on policy changes formulated by the populations most affected
- Individual New Yorkers and other partners who want to get involved and share values of equity, justice, inclusivity, intersectionality, accountability, transparency, learning, and listening

WCC is committed to learning and evolving to develop the partnerships, tools, and resources needed to effectively advance women’s civic journeys. Our hope is that all sectors will join us in emphasizing the importance of women’s civic engagement to collectively envision a more just and equitable society.





# INTRODUCTION



In 2018, as WCC reflected on our history as a predominantly white women's civic association, alongside declining membership, a broad mission, and inconsistent impact, we initiated a strategic planning process to transform the organization into being more focused and mission-driven through a process that included a listening tour, a landscape analysis, an examination of secondary literature, and a developmental evaluation.<sup>5</sup>

Various nonprofit and community-based organizations (CBOs)<sup>6</sup> shared with WCC that women's civic engagement is an urgent area of need amid broader concerns over the decline of American civic life.<sup>7</sup> This insight served as the basis of our new vision, mission, programs, policies, and values.

To better understand the landscape of civic engagement, WCC analyzed the results of our findings in this document by investigating the following questions:

- How can WCC support all women, particularly those who have been excluded from civic processes, who are interested in participating in neighborhood-level advocacy, local politics, and elections but lack time, energy, financial resources, knowledge, and/or personal connections?
- How can civic engagement practitioners acknowledge, honor, and build from community-led activism and the various ways women are already critically engaged in and leading their communities?
- What political, legal, and racialized barriers prevent women from participating more in a representative democracy? What forces support increased engagement?
- How do we create democratic processes that do not exclude communities?
- How can stakeholders remove barriers, increase civic engagement in New York City, and help support and build the capacity of CBOs and organizations of color to create or expand civic engagement programming?

**The purpose of this document is to understand how social and economic inequities shape women's political participation, to inform WCC's programmatic and policy priorities, and to urge our partners (past, current, and future) in the nonprofit, public, and private sectors to join us in our mission to foster women's civic engagement and build a more equitable New York City.**

Our research draws from literature on youth civic engagement, intersectional feminism, and the role of women in politics and social movements. WCC defines "civic engagement" as the set of behaviors, attitudes, and actions related to critical participation in one's community in pursuit of equity, accountability, wellness, and justice. We define "civic processes" as the formal and informal ways that communities make political decisions about the allocation of material resources and political power.

By analyzing the experiences of adult women in New York City in political participation—from voting to local government—at the intersections of race, gender expression and identity, and class, WCC demonstrates that women are still being excluded from civic processes in significant ways.

This document refers to “women” as a large and diverse group but speaks specifically to the lived experiences of adult women over 18 years old in New York City who face high levels of systemic exclusion, poverty, discrimination, and violence. This group is disproportionately Black, Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic, Latinx,<sup>8</sup> low-income, immigrant, LGBTQ, disabled, incarcerated, primary caregivers, wage workers, and gender non-conforming and non-binary individuals.<sup>9</sup>

Since 2020, the national citizen voting-age population of women of color has increased by 59%, and Black women constitute the largest and most politically active demographic of women of color voters.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the leadership of women in their homes, workplaces, and communities has long paved the way for social movements—from women’s suffrage to civil rights to the movement for Black lives. But there remain clear and ongoing racialized, social, and economic barriers to civic engagement that violate civic and political rights and dilute the power of communities of color.

The onus of promoting civic engagement has fallen on CBOs, nonprofit organizations, or government agencies. Furthermore, in New York City, many CBOs are already involved in civic engagement but lack adequate funding from philanthropy and private sector funders.<sup>11</sup>

**In this document, WCC makes the case for a targeted approach to equitable civic engagement by focusing on programs and policies centering, encouraging, and increasing the participation of women and families who have been excluded from civic processes. Improving civic life requires truly paradigmatic shifts in the balance of power.**

WCC strives to listen to and collaborate with women, particularly low-income women of color, who have experienced the brunt of social and economic inequity. As WCC further explores the relationship between gender and civic engagement, we plan to conduct research, design programs and outreach, and advocate for policies that intentionally address the needs of transgender women and non-binary individuals.

WCC acknowledges that there is a lot of meaningful civic engagement taking place in communities across New York City. However, we recognize the need for greater involvement from individuals (across different races and ethnicities, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, class, ability, age, national origins, religious and spiritual identities, and life experiences) and sectors (nonprofits, foundations, government, private sector) to realize a collective vision of equity and democracy in New York City. There is a role for all individuals and groups committed to doing this work to ensure a just and equitable democracy that represents everyone.



# ABOUT WOMEN CREATING CHANGE

In 1915, a group of women seeking progressive changes in New York City convened as the Women's City Club of New York (WCC).<sup>12</sup> Early WCC members included future First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and labor activist and WCC co-founder Frances Perkins.<sup>13</sup>

WCC's early policy agenda included advocating for white women's suffrage, and during a century of advocacy, the organization effected policy changes that sought to support communities across NYC on a wide array of issues—labor rights, children's rights, fair housing, public education, and public health. For example, in 1918, WCC members established and financed initiatives such as New York City's first free maternity center—to provide comprehensive maternity care to underserved women and address maternal and infant mortality rates.<sup>14</sup>

We acknowledge that our founders and members have been a mostly homogenous group of white women with social privilege, resources, and networks that lacked diversity of race, social class, and background. This led to a limited reach and ability to enact meaningful change for all New Yorkers.

Following decades of declining membership, inconsistent funding, an overly broad mission, and limited impact, WCC decided to re-evaluate our strategies, vision, mission, programs, and policies in 2018. The organization began to move away from its traditional membership structure—exclusionary and elite—to an inclusive structure that WCC is building to meet the needs of today's New York City women. The Women's City Club of New York was renamed Women Creating Change in 2019 to reflect the shift in the organization's mission and structure, and we are actively working to ensure that women of every background are a part of the organization.

**WCC is in the process of conducting research to more fully understand our history so that we can address our legacy and impact and take definitive action toward becoming a welcoming, inclusive, and antiracist organization.**

WCC envisions a more just and equitable New York City where all women are civically engaged—with a specific focus on women who have been most systematically excluded from civic processes. The mission of Women Creating Change is to be an inclusive community that partners with organizations and with New York City women who have been systemically excluded from civic processes to develop programs and influence policies that result in more equitable civic engagement. By focusing on women's civic engagement, we hope to help create more inclusive democratic and civic processes, while building upon the best of WCC's history: inspiring, educating, and connecting women who care deeply about the future of the city.



# METHODOLOGY

As part of our journey to a new vision, mission, programs, and policy, WCC set out to understand the state of women's civic engagement in New York City.

This document outlines key findings from WCC's internal strategic planning process, listening tour, landscape analysis, literature review, and developmental evaluation by Dr. Julie Poncelet of the Action Evaluation Collaborative and the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. The WCC Developmental Evaluation addressed learning questions for the formation of WCC's strategic plan (see Appendix 1).

## Strategic Planning

- **Listening Tour:** Starting in 2018, WCC initiated an ongoing process to reach out to civic and community leaders, advocacy organizations, business leaders, elected officials, and foundations (see Appendix 2).
- **Landscape Analysis:** We explored WCC's past work and the work of other civic engagement organizations and identified gaps in gender-based programming and policy (see Appendix 3).
- **Bibliography:** WCC conducted a review of secondary literature on youth civic engagement, intersectional feminist scholarship and advocacy, local democracy, and the state of women's civic engagement at the city, state, and federal levels (see Bibliography).

## Developmental Evaluation

- **Survey:** WCC designed and issued a survey (see Appendix 4) on the state of women's civic engagement to more than 100 peer organizations.<sup>15</sup> Eighteen (18) of the 26 organizations that responded to the survey consented to have the name of their organization listed as survey respondents (see Appendix 5).
- **Focus Groups:** WCC held three focus groups—with the [City University of New York \(CUNY\)](#), the [Grace Institute](#), and the [New York Immigration Coalition](#)—to learn about the main drivers and barriers to civic participation. Forty-five (45) adult women over 18 years old from New York City participated (see Appendix 6).
- **Sensemaking Workshop:** Dr. Poncelet led WCC staff, selected WCC board members, and longtime partners in a sensemaking meeting, which is a process by which stakeholders are engaged in the collective analysis, meaning-making, and reflection of data and insights collected from the focus groups and survey.

As we work to evolve our programs and policies to meet the needs of women in New York City, we plan to conduct ongoing research, program design, and evaluation to address the women and individuals not specifically surveyed in this evaluation. WCC will work hard to expand our work to include non-binary individuals, women who are transgender, incarcerated, older adults, and those living with disabilities.



# DEFINING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



As part of our strategic planning process, WCC sought to develop an expansive definition of “civic engagement.” It was important to consider various definitions of “civic engagement” as related to gender.

According to nonprofit organization Civic Ventures’ Richard Adler and Judy Goggin, “civic engagement” has been variously described as community service, collective action, public leadership, direct government action, and movement building for social change.<sup>16</sup> Thomas Ehrlich, former president of Indiana University, wrote in 2000, “Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.”<sup>17</sup> The “traditional” actions associated with civic engagement include voting, signing a petition, joining a civic association, running for office, or volunteering.

See Figure 1 for more examples.

Figure 1



As gender studies scholars LeeRay M. Costa and Karen J. Leong note, civic engagement practitioners—from nonprofit organizations to university administrators—frequently define “civic engagement” in a “neutral and universalizing” language for understanding politics, citizenship, democracy, and the electoral process by “failing to account for differences of gender, race, or class in how people are taught to engage in or access civic life.”<sup>18</sup> Some definitions of civic engagement make assumptions about who can and should participate and do not directly address how there came to be disparities in participation. As legal scholar and critical theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw suggests, discriminatory political processes overlap with different modes of discrimination and privilege based on race and gender, as well as gender identity, sexuality, ability, age, and health, to generate and reproduce social and economic inequities.<sup>19</sup> For women, particularly women of color, the practices that constitute civic engagement can be time-consuming and inaccessible.

Racialized processes such as political gerrymandering, voter suppression, and efforts to discourage the participation and accurate count of the U.S. Census dilute the political power of communities, largely affecting communities of color and their ability to advocate against policies that may negatively impact community well-being and health.<sup>20</sup> The political exclusion of communities of color is not only a key driver of racialized, gendered, and classed inequities, but also a way of organizing and managing white supremacy.<sup>21</sup>

The term “civic” in “civic engagement” can conceptually limit inclusion and participation to those who can claim legal citizenship status.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, the concept of “citizenship,” often used when defining civic engagement, has been historically used to restrict certain individuals’ civic rights—namely, the rights to vote, serve as elected representatives, protest, and assemble. For example, the 1857 Supreme Court decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* declared all freed and enslaved Black persons ineligible for citizenship, revoking the right to vote of many recently freed Black persons.<sup>23</sup>

Scholars also suggest that “civic” limits inclusion and participation to individuals who conform to the popular-imagination concept of the “ideal” citizen.<sup>24</sup> Feminist scholars Susan C. Bourque and Jean Grossholtz argued in 1970 that characteristics associated with masculinity, such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, and pragmatism, and women’s abilities to adopt these traits have long represented the criteria for inclusion into leadership levels of political life.<sup>25</sup> Critical leadership scholar Helena Liu traced the ways in which European and North American empire, white supremacy, and cisheteropatriarchy not only shaped “ideal” citizenship but embedded these white, masculinist ideals into the leadership mechanisms and structures of organizations, political institutions, and corporations.<sup>26</sup> Thus, leadership roles have tended to be “overwhelmingly accorded to white, cis-gender, heterosexual, elite-class, and able-bodied men.”<sup>27</sup>

Responding to various definitions of “civic engagement,” Costa and Leong note that some practitioners and scholars prefer the framework of “community engagement.”<sup>28</sup> Citing sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis and philosopher Alison Assiter, they also describe “community engagement” as the process by which “different participants share compatible value systems that can cut across differences in positionings and identities.”<sup>29</sup>

The term “community engagement” decenters formal political institutions, such as local government, and emphasizes the capacities and abilities of women and families to lead group decision-making.<sup>30</sup> Another term, “critical engagement,” is offered by Nan Alamilla Boyd and Jillian Sandell in Costa and Leong’s study. This term sees political decision-making processes as means for communities to develop understandings of power, injustice, and inequity to challenge dominant systems and create change.<sup>31</sup> Critical engagement with formal public institutions, within a broader context of community engagement, is essential to paradigm shifts in power.

As we define “civic engagement,” we attempt to account for 1) how women are already involved in their communities, 2) how women are formally and informally excluded from many processes, and 3) how more women can get involved in their neighborhoods and communities in diverse and meaningful ways.

WCC recognizes, honors, and builds from previous and ongoing efforts to improve the state of civic engagement and democratic participation in New York City and beyond, led by activists, educators, CBOs, and other nonprofit organizations. Thus, we continue to use the term “civic engagement” but continuously work on evolving and expanding this definition to include forms of participation, collective action, and activism that may be termed “community engagement” or “critical engagement.”

**WCC defines “civic engagement” as the set of behaviors, attitudes, and actions related to participation in one’s community in pursuit of equity, accountability, wellness, and justice. The outcome of improved civic engagement is a democracy that meets everyone’s basic needs and ensures all community members have the power, tools, and skills to participate in collective decision-making.**

WCC focuses on civic engagement to emphasize the meaningful ways local government processes, such as elections or the funding of public agencies, still shape women’s lived experiences. This means working in collaboration with women, communities, POC-led nonprofits, and CBOs to critically engage with, bolster, and ensure the protection of women’s rights to vote, fair representation, political participation, and protest. At the same time, formal political participation is not and cannot be the only way to improve the quality of life in a community. Thus, while we actively engage with formal political institutions, we also encourage all civic engagement practitioners to incorporate “nontraditional” community-based forms of political participation such as mutual aid, community organizing, and neighborhood service projects into their program and policy strategy.

Even while excluded from citizenship status, many communities have successfully built and organized for positive social changes.<sup>32</sup>

When more people participate in their communities, they challenge systems of power and inch closer toward a society that cares for equity, accountability, wellness, and justice for women and their families. It is a democracy where civic engagement means caring for everyone’s basic needs, and where all community members—whether in a neighborhood, city, state, or country—have the power, tools, and skills to participate in collective decision-making.



# THE NEED FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

## Civic engagement supports democracy, jobs, community health, and equity.

When institutions such as religious congregations, local associations, and informal associations in neighborhoods, cities, and states are committed to building a strong culture and infrastructure of civic engagement, community members become more attached to and invested in the community, which can have a positive effect on an area's economic health.<sup>33</sup> Social policy researcher Jodi Benenson directly links formal and informal forms of civic engagement among low-income individuals to improved access to personal skill development and social networks. Opportunities to develop transferable skills, such as public speaking or team administration, and social networks can lead to increased access to future jobs, leadership, and education opportunities.

Increased access to opportunities can in turn contribute to individuals' perceived employability, employment status, or new career, education, or employment aspirations.<sup>34</sup> Researchers have also linked civic engagement to improved health outcomes: *Healthy People 2030*, a federal initiative to promote public health research and objectives, considers civic participation a key determinant of physical, social, and mental health in a community.<sup>35</sup>

## A strong infrastructure is essential for civic participation.

WCC's developmental evaluation asked women in focus groups and surveyed peer organizations to identify positive forces that support women's civic engagement in New York City. Women agreed that support comes from access to information and resources on how to engage civically. Both groups also identified that positive forces enabling engagement include women's networks where women can meet like-minded peers and learn collectively about effective civic engagement strategies, and access to free skill-building programs, mentorships, or workshops to develop civic skill sets and support community organizing. Table 2 (see next page) summarizes the feedback identified by peer organizations and women surveyed in WCC's developmental evaluation, from most frequently mentioned to least.

**TABLE 2: POSITIVE FORCES THAT SUPPORT WOMEN'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN NYC<sup>36</sup>**

Identified by Women in Focus Groups	Identified by Peer Organizations
Women have easy access to relatable information relevant to civic engagement in NYC in diverse languages	Women have access to other women, to gain support and learn collectively about effective civic engagement strategies
Family and community support systems that value women and their contributions	Women have opportunities to build their civic skill sets
Women have access to women's groups or networks that offer women safe spaces to gather, share, and celebrate women	Women know about their rights, including civic and political rights
Women have access to free skill-building programs, mentorships, and workshops dedicated to and designed for women that are culturally sensitive and ethnically diverse (with a focus on shared experiences)	Women have access to information and resources about how to engage civically in New York City
CBOs, nonprofits, and individuals in NYC committed to systems-level change that support women or communities marginalized economically, politically, socially, and environmentally	Women are accessing a range of civic engagement opportunities, from signing petitions to attending meetings or protests to volunteering with a local nonprofit
New York City or New York State policies that support communities, women, and marginalized populations	
Technology to simplify civic engagement (e.g., social media)	

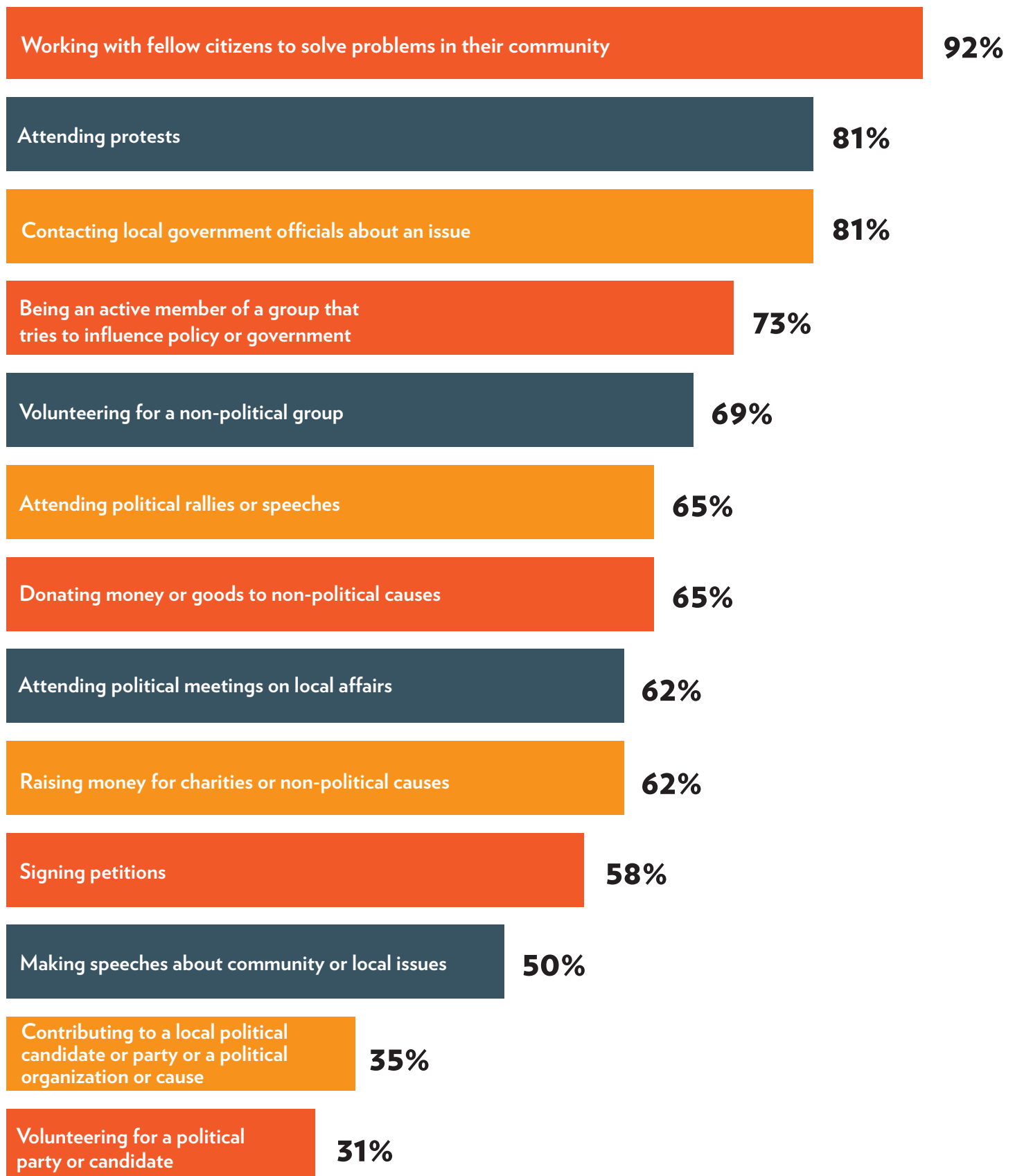
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, on an average day between 2011 to 2015, a greater percentage of women volunteered than men.<sup>37</sup> As another peer organization shared with WCC, “Women have a tradition of leading community and school boards, church-related groups, and other institutions that feed into civic engagement.”<sup>38</sup>

As WCC’s developmental evaluation shows, women are civically engaged in diverse ways (see Figure 2). The most common forms of civic participation identified by survey respondents are problem-solving in communities (92%),

attending protests (81%), contacting local government officials about an issue (81%), and being active members of groups that try to influence policy or government (73%).<sup>39</sup> But as we examine women’s realities like disproportionately high poverty rates and widespread underrepresentation in government, we see that we need to expand the power and influence of the current pool of engaged women and create new opportunities for more women to get involved to make positive changes.

Figure 2

**According to Peer Organizations, Women in NYC Engage Civically in Diverse Ways<sup>40</sup>**





**“When barriers such as time, financial resources, and transportation are not an issue, we see women assuming important leadership roles in their neighborhoods and across the city.”<sup>41</sup>**

PEER ORGANIZATION

### **Greater investment in women’s civic participation is necessary.**

Political exclusion is visible in direct government representation. Across the country, more women are running for office than ever before, but more women are not getting elected.<sup>42</sup> In New York State, 18 out of 63 state senators (28%) are women and only five are women of color.<sup>43</sup> In the 150-member State Assembly, there is a slightly higher percentage of women (33%), but only 27 out of 150 (18%) assembly members are women of color.<sup>44</sup> As of April 2021, women fill only 14 out of 51 (27%) New York City Council seats, and 12 are women of color.<sup>45</sup> In the upcoming 2021 City Council election, due to term limits on 31 seats, only five women are likely to remain in office, while the other six will be term-limited, possibly reducing the already low level of women’s representation.<sup>46</sup> It was not until January 2018 that Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo became the first Black woman Majority Leader on the New York City Council.<sup>47</sup> There has never been an openly trans person in any level of elected office in New York City or State.<sup>48</sup> At the neighborhood level in New York City, an average of 43 percent of community board members were women, even though women make up more than half the city’s population.<sup>49</sup>

Twenty-four (24) out of 26 organizations surveyed by WCC believe that more significant investment in women’s civic engagement in New York City is needed, especially for women of color, immigrant women, and working class women.<sup>50</sup> Many women’s civic engagement organizations “don’t always take into account the obstacles and limitations of other women who may not be fully engaged in civic life in the traditional sense,” a peer organization shared with WCC.<sup>51</sup>

**“It’s important to broaden our definition of civic engagement to include all the ways women work to improve their communities—it’s not just about voting and elections.”<sup>52</sup>**

As Jodi Benenson writes, not all civic engagement opportunities are created equal.<sup>53</sup> First, certain kinds of civic engagement, such as voting, may not lead to social network building and skills development. Second, some civic engagement opportunities are more time-, energy-, and resource-intensive than others. For example, attending a community board meeting requires far less time, energy, and general knowledge than participating on community board subcommittees or serving as a full member does. Finally, the American systems of political exclusion, such as voter suppression, partisan gerrymandering, and campaign finance reform—historical and ongoing legacies of racism, sexism, and classism—continue to actively bar or disqualify certain groups from civic participation in the first place. Today, voting laws bar more than 21 million noncitizen immigrants in the United States from electing representatives.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the Sentencing Project estimates 5.2 million Americans with felony convictions were disenfranchised in the 2020 presidential election.<sup>55</sup>

Women’s civic engagement should be a high-priority agenda item for everyone—individuals, community leaders, public officials, organizations, corporations, and others—who care about improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers. Expanded civic engagement and civic education can lead to positive health and economic outcomes as well as the building of a pipeline to community boards and elected office.<sup>56</sup>

The background of the entire page is a solid orange color. Overlaid on this background is a repeating pattern of stylized, light-orange silhouettes of people's heads and shoulders. The silhouettes are of various shapes and sizes, representing a diverse group of individuals. They are arranged in a way that they appear to be looking forward, creating a sense of a crowd or community.

# SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

**As Kimberlé Crenshaw, among numerous Black feminist scholars and activists, has clarified, routine experiences of bias, discrimination, and violence perceived as individual and isolated are the results of overlapping social and systemic oppressions, to the particular disadvantage and harm of Black women.<sup>57</sup>**

WCC's analysis of "women's civic engagement" draws from this approach. In the realm of civic engagement, by failing to account for the preexisting vulnerabilities of disenfranchised women, exclusive political processes create "yet another dimension of disempowerment."<sup>58</sup>

Thus, seemingly individual and isolated challenges to civic engagement such as limited time, energy, and knowledge are considered systemic barriers, alongside formal mechanisms of political exclusion such as voter suppression and partisan redistricting. These barriers particularly affect and create additional challenges for women belonging to marginalized identities. One peer organization shared with WCC that the organizations already targeting women's civic engagement focus on women who already have the privilege and access to be politically engaged, often failing to take into account various social, economic, and knowledge barriers faced by some communities, largely low-income women of color.<sup>59</sup> WCC has identified the following barriers hindering women, their families, and their communities from directly participating in political decision-making:

### **Burden of Work and Care**

The lack of government and employer support for women-identifying workers creates undue constraints on time, energy, and financial resources, hindering civic participation.

### **Low Wages**

Increased civic engagement among low-income women during presidential elections has been positively linked to improved welfare programs.<sup>60</sup> Thus, a strong infrastructure for civic engagement that adapts to these particular time, energy, and resource demands is directly linked to improving livelihoods for low-income women and women of color and their families. At the moment, the federal and state social programs, which comprise our welfare system, are failing to care for and support a struggling domestic workforce consisting largely of women. In addition to insufficient and unresponsive government social programs, employers fail to provide sufficient wages, benefits, and flexibility to employees.

**As described by WCC's focus groups, when women, unsupported by the government and their employers, are involved in the unpaid labor of caring for children and running households, the added responsibility of civic engagement may seem like a time-consuming, inaccessible, and even arduous task.<sup>61</sup>**

For many women of color, the tasks of civic engagement are more likely to pose a greater challenge. In New York City, Latinas account for 40.5 percent of women-headed households with children, more than any other group.<sup>62</sup> Black women are also overrepresented among all women-headed households, leading families who heavily rely on their income.<sup>63</sup>

In New York City, home to 4.4 million women and girls,<sup>64</sup> nearly one in four women live in poverty.<sup>65</sup> This is seven percentage points higher than for men.<sup>66</sup> According to a 2016 report by Legal Services NYC, 62 percent of low-income LGBT New Yorkers struggled to pay for a basic need or service.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the report cites a 2014 study finding that transgender Americans are almost four times more likely to have a household income under \$10,000 per year than the population as a whole (15% compared to 4%).<sup>68</sup> When the statistics are further broken down by race, it is even clearer how women in New York City bear the brunt of social and economic inequality (see Table 3).

TABLE 3: SNAPSHOT OF WOMEN IN NEW YORK CITY (2018) <sup>69</sup>	
Groups in New York City	Rate of Poverty
Latina women	29.5% <sup>70</sup>
Black women	23.4% <sup>71</sup>
Asian women	21.8% <sup>72</sup>
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women	17.9% <sup>73</sup>
White women	12.8% <sup>74</sup>
Indigenous women	24.5% (2013) <sup>75</sup>

Time Constraints

More than 75 percent of New York City residents who reported that they did not volunteer in the last year cited time demands as the primary obstacle.<sup>76</sup> Some volunteer opportunities do not offer enough time flexibility or geographical proximity for potential participants, which may further discourage community members from getting involved.

Leadership and participation in community organizations and political appointments also require significant time investments. Membership on a

community board, for example, is a non-salaried volunteer position that requires an estimated 10-plus hours per month to attend regular subcommittee and board meetings. This does not include the additional efforts required to be an effective board member, such as regularly communicating with government officials and community members.<sup>77</sup> When our civic processes—from service opportunities to community boards—do not consider the time, energy, and financial demands on women, they disproportionately constrain the capacity of women to advocate for their needs and interests.

Gendered Stereotypes

Negative social and cultural gender stereotypes discourage women from taking on leadership roles. Critical leadership scholar Helena Liu has enumerated the ways in which traits venerated as “great leadership”—individualism, assertiveness, orderliness, and rationality—were historically ascribed to cisgender, heterosexual white masculinity, while “chaos, irrationality, violence, and the breakdown of self-regulation” are regarded as an “other.”<sup>78</sup> According to Liu, these stereotypes mythologize the skills necessary for leadership, when, in fact, most of the tasks related to leadership and responsibility to others—administration, coordination, collaboration, communication, supervision, team building, and decision-making—can be learned, practiced, and honed.<sup>79</sup> Second, it suggests that any barrier can be overcome with individual assertiveness, self-confidence, power-posing, resilience, gratitude, a makeover, or charisma.<sup>80</sup> While these are useful skills to develop, overstating their value obscures the root causes of social and economic inequities.

Social and cultural norms may shape women’s and their colleagues’ confidence in their capacity as leaders. A 2019 study on the relationship between gender stereotypes, self-confidence, and test performance found that stereotypes cause participants to exaggerate actual gender performance gaps.<sup>81</sup> The results suggest women are less confident about themselves in domains where the male advantage is larger, including politics, activism, and community leadership.

**“I think there is a gap in resources for women who are interested in becoming more civically engaged but don’t know how to start. Perceiving oneself as a leader is also critical and many of our constituents do not feel they have personal power or agency over their own lives. Lastly, opportunities to participate in civically engaged groups of women would help with social and political isolation.”<sup>82</sup>**

PEER ORGANIZATION

## **Lack of Civic Education**

Limited citywide adult- and family-oriented civic learning opportunities inhibit access to essential skills, knowledge, and networks.

### **Adult and Family Civic Education**

In 2020, the Annenberg Public Policy Center Civics Knowledge Survey reported that more than half of American adults (51%) were able to name all three branches of government.<sup>83</sup> This was a high point in the survey but still shows that a significant proportion of American adults do not have basic civics knowledge. This may be partially attributed to the gradual defunding of civic education and social studies between the 1960s and the 1980s in favor of easily testable subjects and STEM subjects like math and reading.<sup>84</sup> Since the mid-1990s, a resurgence of interest in improving civic engagement among policymakers, administrators, nonprofit organizations, and educators has focused on young people.<sup>85</sup> However, expanding civic education opportunities is as important for adults who either did not have learning opportunities themselves or who were excluded from those learning opportunities due to overlapping systems of oppression as it is for young people.<sup>86</sup> Education research has also supported developing curricula and structuring learning environments that adapt to adults’ specific learning styles and needs, such as childcare support for adult learners.<sup>87</sup>

Women in WCC’s focus groups also identified education programs with narrowly defined criteria based on income or education level as potential barriers to civic engagement.<sup>88</sup> For example, women are either too well-educated (beyond a GED) or not low-income enough to qualify. Though organizations often develop such criteria to meet funding requirements or to focus on specific populations, there is a need for further investment in civic engagement programming for women regardless of income or education level.

## **Culturally Responsive Content**

By law, New York City public agencies are mandated to provide language services and translated documents to non-English-speaking New Yorkers, such as language interpreters at poll sites. 49 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home, and one sixth of all households do not contain anyone over the age of 14 who speaks English well.<sup>89</sup> People with limited English proficiency are twice as likely as the general population to live in poverty.<sup>90</sup> Women in WCC’s focus groups underscored the importance of culturally responsive and appropriate civic engagement materials. They noted that outreach, programs, and service formats that may work in certain geographies and for certain ethnic communities may not be applicable for others.<sup>91</sup> While public programs and information are becoming increasingly available in more languages, many public resources relevant to critical engagement such as budget trackers or participatory budgeting are only available in the most commonly spoken languages, such as Spanish and Chinese.<sup>92</sup> As research on youth civic education shows, the lack of socially and culturally relevant curricula and content fosters a disconnect between what participants study in learning environments about democracy, participation, and community and what they experience in their daily lives. “Being Black and Latinx in the U.S. is a political experience. You experience inequality in a way that is lived, not-textbooked,” San Francisco State University professor and educator Shawn Ginwright explains. “It’s not the same for white young people. They live white privilege, although they may not experience it consciously.”<sup>93</sup>



## Political Exclusion

### Census Undercount

New Yorkers must be fairly and accurately represented in the United States Census, which affects their share of federal funding and the shape of voting districts. In 2010, the city's self-response rate was less than 62 percent, compared with the national average of 76 percent.<sup>94</sup> In 2020, the city's census self-response rate held at 62 percent as the counting period was complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a shortened deadline.<sup>95</sup> Significantly, many populations were left out and undercounted. Repeated obstructions by the federal government, including shifting deadlines, attempts to identify undocumented residents, and understaffed and underfunded offices, disrupted the ability to get an accurate count. In addition, while the 2020 Census included response options for same-sex couples, it specifically asked, "What is Person 1's sex?" instead of gender, which clearly excludes the existence of transgender and non-binary persons.<sup>96</sup>

Most of the undercounted areas continue to be predominantly low-income Black and Hispanic neighborhoods, and women and girls specifically fall under one or numerous categories that are considered historically undercounted.<sup>97</sup> A 2018 U.S. Census Bureau survey showed that fewer women, especially Hispanic, Black, and Asian women, intended to participate in the census.<sup>98</sup> This can also be attributed to the persistent lack of public agencies' messaging clarifying the importance of the U.S. Census and its relationship to communities' access to resources and political power. The undercount is also connected to fears over the historical use of the census as a means of surveillance of and harm to communities of color.<sup>99</sup> The results of the census impact the allocation of nearly \$1 trillion in federal spending toward programs important to women and their families, including grants for the prevention of gender-based violence, family violence, childcare, and school lunch programs.<sup>100</sup>

### Partisan and Racial Redistricting

After the collection of the U.S. Census data, state and local mapping commissions draw new legislative maps. Political parties have taken advantage of this process to choose voters who are most likely to give them

an advantage on Election Day. One tactic is the splintering of communities of color into small pieces across several districts, so no group can significantly impact any election and no one elected official is accountable to a community of interest (COI).<sup>101</sup> This has led to noncompetitive elections, legislative deadlocks, and the reelection of career politicians, who may not reflect their districts' changing demographics and interests. New legislative maps will be drawn in 2021, which will be in effect for the next decade. The latest census results reported that New York will lose one congressional seat.<sup>102</sup>

### Restrictive Election and Voting Laws

Some barriers to voting include citizenship-based voting requirements, felony disenfranchisement, voter ID laws, and voter purges.<sup>103</sup> Despite recent election reforms,<sup>104</sup> other life experiences continue to restrict individuals' ability to vote, such as physical disability, homelessness, domestic and sexual violence, and lack of access to non-English-language ballots. Women are the fastest-growing group of incarcerated people, meaning laws that violate incarcerated people's right to vote will substantially affect women.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, survivors of intimate partner violence, largely women and disproportionately transgender women, often flee their homes without official documents needed for voter registration, or have their documents withheld by abusers.<sup>106</sup>

### Underfunded and Inefficient Local Election Administration

Inefficient election administration and a complex voter registration process also negatively affect public participation. During the 2020 presidential election, the New York City Board of Elections drew widespread criticism for long and often disorganized lines at early-voting polls, a disadvantage to primary caretakers, elderly, differently abled, and working voters, especially women and women of color.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, the voter registration application in New York State is a multistep affair involving several government agencies. In the 2020 presidential election, voters, particularly in communities of color, were confronted with long lines, lack of voter registration options, botched absentee ballots, and limited precinct locations, among other issues.<sup>108</sup>

## Government Accountability and Accessibility

Government information—such as budget trackers, participatory budgeting programs, and public records—that is currently available is valuable but not necessarily usable or capable of facilitating meaningful public participation. Data may also be missing or inaccurate. For example, Staten Island’s community board demographic data is “missing entirely” and other reports on community board demographics have inconsistencies that are partially due to different reporting methods.<sup>109</sup>

In 2016, researchers at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs and the New York City Mayor’s Office of Data Analytics found that CBOs were generally uncertain about the accuracy of data, availability of relevant data, and complicated interface of the city’s open data portal.<sup>110</sup> Political scientists Suzanne Piotrowski and Yuguo Liao have shown that the complicated structure of government bureaucracy alone can prohibit consistent and quality civic participation. This includes “inflexible bureaucratic structures and procedures, lack of standardization across [public agencies], and the diversity of organizational culture.”<sup>111</sup>

## Protest Suppression

Protest is an essential component of civic engagement, by pressuring a slow, reactionary, and inefficient government to respond to demands for equity, accountability, wellness, and justice. Protesting is an important avenue for disenfranchised communities to get their voices heard when other channels have proven unresponsive or ineffective.

**As political scientist Cathy Cohen writes, “The rebirth of our democracy lives in the possibility of protest, organizing, and, as Frederick Douglass famously insisted, agitation.”<sup>112</sup>**

As it has been demonstrated in New York City and across the country, the government has deployed its police powers to surveil, suppress, and harm Black and Brown communities. In doing so, they violate individuals’ fundamental right to protest. Historically, and to this day, Black women activists have led the movement against racial injustice and American policing.<sup>113</sup> Protest violence against people of color particularly places Black women at risk.<sup>114</sup>

The most recent example is the outbreak of police violence in New York City during the June 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. Human Rights Watch, as well as the New York Department of Investigation (DOI), has documented numerous incidents in which armed police officers, unprovoked and without warning, escalated the use of force against peaceful protestors rallying against police brutality and the murder of George Floyd.<sup>115</sup>

The Civilian Complaint Review Board documented 1,646 allegations of misconduct, and the DOI found that the New York Police Department (NYPD) defaulted to “disorder tactics and methods without adjustment to reflect the NYPD’s responsibility for facilitating lawful First Amendment expression.”<sup>116</sup> These abuses disproportionately target Black communities, which are already vulnerable to policing.<sup>117</sup> The DOI also found that, of the over 2,000 arrests made by the NYPD during the protests, Black people accounted for the majority of the most serious charges (68% of the 166 felony arrests).<sup>118</sup>

“Kettling” is a police practice to control alleged disorderly conduct by corralling anyone who happens to be within an area and then arresting everyone within the cordon.<sup>119</sup> This practice was deployed by the NYPD in the June 2020 protests. In one particular incident, as recounted by Human Rights Watch, New York City police trapped, beat, and arrested more than 250 peaceful protestors in the Bronx neighborhood of Mott Haven using this technique.<sup>120</sup> Related techniques for crowd control include emergency mandatory curfews and orders to disperse.



## Inadequate Funding

The necessary infrastructure for women's civic engagement—financial and organizational support for community-based organizations (CBOs) and smaller nonprofits—currently lacks the nonprofit sector's focus and targeted investment. Many CBOs take on the crucial work of promoting civic engagement where city or state public agencies are lacking. "Encouraging greater participation requires dedicated staff with a local presence and is resource intensive," a peer organization shared with WCC in a survey.<sup>121</sup>

In 2008, a [Greenlining Institute](#) study found that only 8 percent of philanthropic funds were allocated to nonprofits led by people of color.<sup>122</sup> [The Bridgespan Group](#) and social entrepreneurship nonprofit [Echoing Green](#) have found that on average the revenues of Black-led nonprofit organizations are 24 percent smaller than the revenues of white-led counterparts.<sup>123</sup>

The Building Movement Project has shown that leaders of color have, on average, smaller budgets and lack access to financial support from a variety of funding sources, including board members, individual donors, and foundations.<sup>124</sup> This undermines their abilities to hire staff, build capacity, and introduce or expand civic engagement programming. In order to undertake the work needed to provide civic engagement outreach, education programs, and policy advocacy, CBOs and POC-led nonprofits need philanthropic support.

This is not an exhaustive list of barriers, but it demonstrates some of the reasons why women are not civically engaged in ways that they can and should be. It should also be clear that gender, like race and class, is an important factor in studying, improving, and expanding civic engagement opportunities in New York City. Progress will require concrete action from partners across public, private, and nonprofit sectors to support ongoing work led by communities and CBOs.



# PROGRAM & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Through active collaborations across sectors and strong community partnerships, we can improve the state of women’s civic engagement and work toward building a better democracy. The following recommendations<sup>125</sup> were developed from a number of sources—feedback from women in focus groups, input from peer organizations, research, and WCC’s membership in several coalitions that focus on New York programs and policy.**

These recommendations aim to bolster women’s civic engagement by addressing barriers to participation on policy and program levels, proposing practices for active women-centered engagement, and holding elected officials and public institutions accountable for protecting women’s right to vote, participate, be fairly represented, organize, and protest. This document specifically focuses on recommendations related to civic engagement—to increase and facilitate participation among New York City women.

## **WCC provides these recommendations for two primary purposes:**

1. to offer peer organizations, government officials and agencies, foundation partners, and the private sector concrete steps to increase civic engagement collectively and fill gaps in the current landscape of opportunities and needs for women; and
2. to inform and shape WCC’s work as we develop programs, policies, and partnerships.

All sectors have a role in advancing civic engagement and removing barriers, so more women can effectively shape and influence our democracy. See Table 4 for a list of integral change partners and allies for effective women’s civic engagement.

**TABLE 4:  
CHANGE PARTNERS & ALLIES**

Community organizations and nonprofits—especially those led by the communities they represent and that use the services provided
Funders committed to racial justice, gender equity, and social justice
Elected officials and government agencies committed to more equitable and just women’s civic engagement
Advocacy coalitions focused on policy changes formulated by the populations most affected
Individual New Yorkers and other partners who want to get involved and have shared values of equity, justice, inclusivity, intersectionality, accountability, transparency, learning and listening

## **Nonprofit and Community Organizations**

### **1.1. Expand and create youth, adult, and intergenerational civic education programs that develop women's skills and knowledge.**

Nonprofits and CBOs should continue to expand civic education and engagement programs to meet participants at various levels of interest, knowledge, and availability. This includes creating workshops, classes, and fellowship programs grounded in participants' life experiences and focused on taking action at the local level, where participants are able to locate themselves and their experiences within the city's various power structures. WCC encourages drawing from Cathy Cohen, Joseph Kahne, and Jessica Marshall's "Lived Civics" approach, where the "classroom is open to and structured around the many ways, some positive and some negative, young people engage with the political and civic world that surrounds them."<sup>126</sup> Similarly, Generation Citizen's action-oriented civics practice is a "student-centered, project-based approach to civic education that develops individual skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for 21st century democratic practice."<sup>127</sup>

### **1.2. Account for caregiving, time, energy, and financial constraints in programs and engagement opportunities.**

Civic learning and engagement opportunities should be designed for the participant with the most limitations. Organizations should consider programming and partnerships that minimize potential burdens, including creating family-oriented content and curricula, providing childcare, distributing MetroCards to program participants, offering devices for online events, and providing stipends.

### **1.3. Provide culturally specific and widely accessible materials that meet diverse backgrounds, needs, and abilities.**

Organizations should devote substantial resources to ensuring that facilitators and educational content are sensitive, adaptable, and accessible to people with different levels of comfort, education, language skills, and familiarity with American government. Recognizing that no two individuals or groups are the same, it is important to avoid generalizations, while 1) training and hiring facilitators who can develop trust with multiple

stakeholders, and 2) developing cultural sensitivity and accessibility standards to include non-English speakers, people with learning disabilities, and people with physical disabilities. Consultants or staff who represent the ethnic and linguistic composition of communities they seek to support<sup>128</sup> should shape the standards and content as part of an iterative and evolving process. One important way to measure the cultural accessibility of materials is to engage participants and stakeholders in evaluation processes and feedback loops to ask the right questions and consistently assess materials and how content is delivered. Regular evaluation through methods like surveys, short interviews, and focus groups can help ensure cultural competence. Participants should be compensated for varying levels of participation and leadership in evaluation efforts through stipends or other support mechanisms.

### **1.4. Build mutually supportive partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs), civic engagement-focused organizations, and secondary learning institutions.**

Many CBOs have limited budgets, staffing, or capacities and skills to meet the civic engagement needs of their constituents. Organizations should complement and supplement each other's work based on varied experiences and available funds, in ways like curriculum development support, networking, mentorship opportunities, resource sharing, and skills building. The goal is to not duplicate efforts, but rather to fill gaps and provide support and useful information that could help individuals who want to learn about civic engagement and organizations that want to provide civic education. Coalitions and working groups like the New York Immigration Coalition's Civic Engagement Collaborative provide valuable forums to share best practices and facilitate partnerships.<sup>129</sup>

CBOs know their constituents best, and other organizations might be able to contribute resources and provide a platform for more engagement. Well-resourced organizations should credit and compensate partner organizations accordingly. They should amplify the power of community groups and smaller nonprofits. Colleges, universities, and other secondary learning institutions should also be partners given their history and leadership role as sites of activism, service learning, and community engagement.

### 1.5. Incorporate an expansive definition of civic engagement into programs and policies.

Organizations should continue to think creatively about what constitutes civic activity—beyond voting and electoral campaigns—and how to measure its impact. This means creating programs and evaluation metrics focusing on connecting the diverse skill sets and talents of participants to corresponding or reimagined engagement opportunities from creating a community garden to designing posters for a protest, rather than focusing solely on behavior changes in participants. Other options for focus and education may include participation on community boards and on organizations' boards, neighborhood mutual aid groups, and strategies for self-care in activism that may include building a network and seeking counseling.<sup>130</sup>

### 1.6. Foster more opportunities for women to build relationships, community, confidence, and leadership skills.

Programs such as workshops, classes, and fellowships should focus on leadership, advocacy skills, self-care and collective care, and strategies for community building. These spaces should cultivate community, help women understand their capacity as leaders, and connect women with other social, community, and political leaders. Organizations should also consider fellowship initiatives for women to learn more about government and hone the skills necessary to contribute. Example initiatives may include:

- Training to build community organizing skills to mobilize constituents about specific issues
- Access to mentors and internship opportunities
- Access to women's groups or networks where women can gather, learn from, and support other women
- Connections to political spaces and political leaders
- Board training for women (that targets those who are or want to be first-time board members)

### 1.7. Build a repository of information, tools, and actionable civic engagement opportunities in New York City.

Develop more centralized spaces for direct participation in community organizations and mutual aid groups. Volunteer hubs, like [New York Cares](#) and [NYC Service](#), are valuable resources that offer many kinds of

volunteer opportunities that are conveniently adjusted for participants' schedules, transportation, skills, and interests. It is important to build upon these examples and continue uplifting other ways of improving communities and creating social change that promotes civic action. A comprehensive, user-friendly hub can facilitate community- and action-oriented options for various schedules, skill sets, and issue areas.<sup>131</sup>

## Government

### 2.1. Expand voting access and rights.

During the 2020 election period, New York State put forward concrete steps to alleviate the logistical challenges of voting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the extension of the early voting period and no-excuse absentee voting.<sup>132</sup> New legislation on voting should focus on further expanding access, increasing the pool of eligible voters, and be shaped by the voices of communities that are most affected. Election administrators and legislators should also commit to easing the complex process of registration and voting by eliminating unnecessary barriers. Such reforms include noncitizen municipal voting, restoration of voting rights for formerly incarcerated and systems-impacted individuals, same-day voter registration, no-fault absentee voting, and vote-by-mail statutes. Current opportunities include:

#### New York City:

- Allow nearly 900,000 lawfully present noncitizen New Yorkers to vote in municipal elections as part of the Our City, Our Vote campaign ([Intro. 1867](#))<sup>133</sup> led by the New York Immigration Coalition and United Neighborhood Houses.

#### New York State:

- Codify the automatic restoration of voting rights upon release from prison and eliminate the need for a conditional pardon by the governor ([Bill S830A and A4448A](#)).<sup>134</sup>
- Pass the [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York \(S7528A\)](#) to establish rights of action for violating voting rights of any member of a protected class, establish and maintain a statewide database of voting and election data, provide assistance to language-minority groups, and institute stricter penalties for voter intimidation.<sup>135</sup>

- Amend the constitutional requirement that persons must register to vote at least 10 days before an election ([Bill S517 and A502](#)).<sup>136</sup>
- Amend the constitution to change absentee voting laws that would allow for “vote by mail” or no-excuse absentee voting ([Bill S360 and A4431](#)).<sup>137</sup>

### Federal:

- Pass the [For the People Act](#) and sign it into law to expand voting rights protections, reduce the influence of corporate donations in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, ensure fair redistricting, and implement other anti-corruption measures.<sup>138</sup>

### 2.2. Fund and improve the city’s election infrastructure.

Implement New York City Board of Elections reform to address efficient administration ([S6226/A5691A](#)).<sup>139</sup> The city and state should continue to recognize the challenges of voting for primary caregivers and working voters, many of whom are women and largely low-income immigrant women and women of color. Efforts include funding more poll site staff, purchasing additional voting machines and addressing technical issues, and offering free childcare services during election periods.<sup>140</sup> Administrators may also improve voting center management to prevent long lines by opening more polling sites and establishing a maximum capacity for voting centers.<sup>141</sup>

### 2.3. Improve voter data analysis: The New York City Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB) should conduct an intersectional analysis on voting rights data in the upcoming Voter Analysis Report.

In the New York Campaign Finance Board’s 2019-2020 [Voter Analysis Report](#), age, race, education, and population of naturalized citizens were found to be the most influential predictors of neighborhood voter registration and turnout data, and gender was not analyzed.<sup>142</sup> In the 2018-2019 Voter Analysis Report, the Board found only a weakly positive relationship between gender and turnout.<sup>143</sup> As political scientist Celeste Montoya argues, an intersectional analysis of voting data

demonstrates a salient relationship between the racial and gendered structural positions of voters and turnout and registration.<sup>144</sup> This requires better quantitative and qualitative data to provide additional insight into the voting barriers of women of color in New York City.<sup>145</sup> Greater understanding of the problem would allow for better gender-inclusive policymaking that increases women’s civic engagement.

### 2.4. Ensure a fair and accurate U.S. Census and redistricting process.

New Yorkers must be fairly and accurately represented through the United States Census, which affects their share of federal funding and the shape of voting districts. Public agencies at all levels should:

- Dedicate substantial resources to ensuring an accurate count of New Yorkers. The U.S. Census Bureau must resist measures that discourage historically undercounted communities from filling out the census, such as a citizenship question.<sup>146</sup>
- Ensure that the redrawing of electoral districts remains a community-driven, nonpartisan process that accurately reflects the geography of communities of interest (COIs).
- Gather input from communities across the city to advocate for shaping and creating a more inclusive form. For example, the next U.S. Census should ask about one’s “gender” instead of their “sex.”

### 2.5. End policing practices like “kettling” that deliberately entrap protestors.

Orders to disperse and emergency mandatory curfews repress dissent, rather than ensure community safety. In a moment of nationwide grief, anger, and mobilization over systemic police brutality, the city should be listening closely to the social and economic conditions of protestors’ demands and:

- **Redirect funds for policing communities toward building community health, safety, and shelter.** The city should invest directly in communities’ welfare: access to shelter, education, transportation, healthy food, and safe water.



- **The city must commit to ending discriminatory policing practices and bolster mechanisms for police accountability** such as the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)<sup>147</sup> and passing new legislation. The recently proposed 12 City Council<sup>148</sup> bills are positive steps, but more work needs to be done. WCC commits to learning from and listening to groups that are most affected by discriminatory policing who are at the forefront of innovative policy solutions.

## 2.6. Increase local and statewide funding for, and coordination of, civic learning and education opportunities for families and adults.

Political education and civic engagement are lifelong learning processes. In order to accommodate childcare needs for working adults, it is important for the city and state, in addition to organizations, to coordinate learning opportunities for intergenerational audiences and families.

- City and state government should continue to administer and fund civic employment and fellowship opportunities for women to learn and engage with government and civic organizations. Some existing examples include the **NYC Civic Corps**, New York State's **Excelsior Service Fellowship Program**, the **Empire State Fellows Program**, and **Urban Fellows**. These initiatives can be improved by continuously targeting outreach to disenfranchised and underrepresented groups.
- Government agencies and institutions should expand civic education in schools and fund civic learning environments outside of schools. CBOs and faith-based institutions are important community resources and hubs that already exist as civic engagement spaces for New Yorkers.

## 2.7. Improve government initiatives that aim to expand public participation.

- **Facilitate public education with open, transparent, and user-friendly government initiatives.** Well-informed public engagement requires an open government. "Usable" information is accurate, accessible, complete, understandable, timely, and available for free. The city must prioritize disseminating information related to government operations, in

compliance with state and local laws regarding ethics, transparency, and open data. The city should continue investing resources in translators and interpreters to reduce communication barriers. This must be supplemented with public education, appropriate funding, staffing, and training to support the regular upkeep of databases and automated decision-making systems, as well as the external review of best practices.

- **Increase funding, improve recruitment, and expand participatory budgeting.** Since 2011, New York City's Participatory Budgeting initiative has enabled residents to propose and vote on capital projects in their City Council districts.<sup>149</sup> The process was adopted by 27 out of 51 districts and allows community members control over \$35 million in capital funding.<sup>150</sup> Projects must benefit the public (schools, parks, libraries, public housing, streets, and other public spaces), cost at least \$50,000, and have a lifespan of five years at minimum. The city should continue to expand this program to all districts and increase its funds. The Civic Engagement Commission is leading the way with its own youth participatory budgeting program, "**It's Our Money**," which should continue to be bolstered.<sup>151</sup>
- **Eliminate unnecessary criteria for small-donor public-matching funds programs for political candidates.** The city and state need to eliminate criteria that make it harder for minor political parties to participate and gain ballot access.<sup>152</sup> The New York Public Campaign Financing Commission's plan for changing New York's campaign finance system through a small-donor public financing system should be enacted into law.<sup>153</sup>

## 2.8. Give community boards a greater voice in advocating for the constituents and neighborhoods they represent.

- **Centralize and standardize information about joining and participating in community boards and other community advisory boards.** Requirements for professional expertise, familiarity with community issues, and leadership experience vary across the 59 districts. A standardized guidebook and processes can ensure greater awareness about the function of community boards, increase participation at public meetings, and facilitate a more diverse pool of applicants.



- **Require each community board to have an urban planning professional.** As neighborhood advocates, community boards have an important voice about the city's land use policies. Technical expertise would give them more power and input over zoning and planning issues and allow them to prioritize community needs over developer needs.<sup>154</sup> In 2015, Council Member Ben Kallos introduced [Intro. 0732-2015](#), "Making Urban Planning Professionals Available to Community Boards," but it has not yet been passed.<sup>155</sup>

## Foundations and Private Sector

Efforts to advance just and equitable civic participation are shaped by organizations that are funded and how they are funded. As programs should target those who have been systemically excluded from civic processes, funders should look at organizations in a similar way. This means recognizing the full extent of operational costs needed to support participants' needs directly, from providing language interpretation services to childcare. WCC supports more equitable civic engagement philanthropy that prioritizes and highlights nonprofits of color that receive less funding in comparison to white-led organizations.

### 3.1. Direct more funding to organizations implementing inclusive civic engagement programming and those that conduct work through an intersectional lens.

Nonprofits and CBOs are often underfunded and are now facing added challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This disproportionately impacts smaller nonprofits.<sup>156</sup> In order for organizations to create opportunities, expand programs, and reach the most marginalized communities, they need funding for capacity building, expansion, and overhead. Civic engagement may fall in between funder categories of policy, advocacy, and social services, so it is important that funders think openly about what constitutes civic engagement and invest in its ecosystem beyond electoral politics. Funders should also consider grants that incentivize collaboration between organizations to collectively work on increasing and improving civic education.

**"Resourcing communities of color requires a radical reimagining of the philanthropic sector. It also demands an honest look at the historic exploitation of and disinvestment in communities of color and their ability to build enough capacity to achieve their aspirational goals."**<sup>157</sup>

### 3.2. Fund organizations of color.

- **Provide general operating support.** Flexible funding is crucial for building capacity in smaller organizations. Nonprofit and community relations leaders April Nishimura et al. explain that persistent and ongoing disinvestment in communities of color can be remedied through multi-year, general operating grants and unrestricted donations, which are "even more important for nonprofits of color because of the intersection of the racial wealth gap and the insularity of white people's social circles—meaning that people of color are less likely to know white people."<sup>158</sup> Funding for both programs and capacity building is important and should be done together over several years, so organizations can pay for staff, infrastructure, and programming in addition to capacity-building help like coaching, organizational consulting, and network learning spaces. This combination is particularly valuable for those programs that give frontline support.<sup>159</sup>

- **Evaluate programs with patience and trust in community knowledge and experience.** Avoid evaluation based on standards of white professionalism. Funders must understand the historical and present way that capacity building has "often encouraged organizations to assimilate to standards rooted in white professionalism that place undue importance on the values of individualism, technical solutions, worship of the written word, and effectiveness."<sup>160</sup> As April Nishimura et al. further argue, these standards often betray other values that are central to smaller nonprofits, such as "building trusting relationships and honoring multiple ways of sharing information, as well as measuring success by the nonprofits' ability to allow community members to gather and meet a variety of community needs."<sup>161</sup> By moving away from these standards, funders can be more effective in supporting tangible community impact.

### 3.3. Fund multi-year initiatives and CBOs focused on movement building.

Cultivating participation, building movements, and organizing in communities takes time, and it is important for funders to acknowledge the value of a bottom-up approach and trust organizations that might not be able to afford robust reporting mechanisms. To sustain movements, political scientist Cathy Cohen suggests that philanthropic organizations should fund civic education; existing organizations and new ones committed to organizing marginalized communities; intermediary organizations, centers, and halfway houses that offer political education and convene activists; and data-gathering projects for researchers and activists to monitor the attitudes and preferences of the public.<sup>162</sup> Foundations must also support investigative participatory civic media to hold public officials accountable.<sup>163</sup> Funding must happen at three different levels, as the [Delta Project](#), a coalition of capacity builders of color in Seattle, lays out: “organizational, community, and systems.”<sup>164</sup> Philanthropy should be actively and constantly showing solidarity, not only in moments of national upheaval.

### 3.4. Establish complementary programs and services that support civic activities.

The private sector should support ongoing civic engagement work led by community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and the government by expanding its programming and service offerings. An example is ride-sharing company Lyft’s subsidized rides for customers going to vote under its [Voter Access Program](#).<sup>165</sup> Companies should also support the civic activities of their employees, which could include providing paid time off on election days.

In addition to these recommendations, civic engagement partners should look closely at how our organizations are run to make sure we are practicing the principles, goals, and ideals we support. WCC has begun to do this by examining the organization’s history and creating a [values statement](#) with strategies and goals to operationalize it. This includes our move to impact investing and resolution to implement the values in all facets of how the organization is run, including partnering with organizations, funders, investment advisors, banks, and vendors that align with our values, vision, and mission. WCC looks forward to ongoing growth and new and continued partnerships to bring about a more just and equitable New York City.



# WOMEN CREATING CHANGE'S PLAN TO INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

**This paper outlines recommendations for nonprofit, community, government, private, and philanthropy partners, and WCC is making a commitment to contribute our resources in ongoing efforts to improve women's civic engagement. WCC's history, research, and developmental evaluation shape our work and path forward as we aim to remove barriers to civic engagement for women in New York City.**

WCC suggests that by expanding civic education, leadership-development opportunities, and partnerships between civic organizations, more women will have access to resources to help navigate civic institutions (e.g., local government) to advocate for changes that improve their lives and communities.

Increasing resources also alleviates urgent impediments to quality of life, enabling women to grow in other areas such as leadership, public speaking, and networking. Over time, more women will become civic leaders, shape policies, and make key decisions in spaces in which they previously did not have access. Fostering community through increased civic education and leadership training can increase confidence and dispel negative gender stereotypes.

Co-designed in focus groups, WCC's vision imagines a more just and equitable New York City where all women are civically engaged.

### **WCC promotes civic engagement around four key goals:**

1. Care for families, friends, and neighbors' basic needs
2. Redress civic and political exclusion as perpetuated by current social, economic, and political systems based on gender, race, class, and citizenship status that have disproportionately impacted women of color
3. Galvanize people power and mobilize resources for disenfranchised communities to create change
4. Realize a vision of a just, equitable, and participatory democracy that leads to improved quality of life, community resilience, and collective accountability

**WCC wants to participate in building a more equitable and inclusive civic environment in New York City by changing the context of engagement to a culture of support for women and families. WCC's Theory of Change (see Appendix 7) outlines our objectives, programs and policy, activities, and short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes.**

### **Our approach is built on four key strategies and objectives:**

1. Center the needs of women who face the most oppression
2. Partner with community-based organizations (CBOs) to offer resources, tools, networks, and educational support
3. Create spaces for women to build and expand their networks and become more engaged
4. Advocate for policies that eliminate systemic barriers to civic participation that are guided by the needs of the communities most affected by those policies

These objectives provide the overall framework for WCC's program and policy work.

## Programs

Recognizing the multitude of barriers to women's civic participation, Civic Matters is a multi-tiered programmatic approach that seeks to identify and remove obstacles, making it easier to get civically engaged and meet the need for more inclusive, gender equity-focused civic learning and participation opportunities. The program co-creates—with its stakeholders—civic engagement opportunities that connect women with information, education, caregiving support, and leadership opportunities.

**In partnership with CBOs, Civic Matters offers opportunities for women who have faced systemic oppression to learn about civic engagement and why it matters; use action-oriented tools and resources; practice using advocacy skills; and engage directly in advocacy for themselves.**

This plan came out of our strategic planning work, and we will implement the programs with the recognition that needs may evolve and require other types of engagement.

**Civic Matters** encompasses four programmatic elements (Civic Workshops, Civic Hub, Civic Fellowships, and Civic Leadership Institute) that are in different stages of development and aim to reach women with different capacities and desires to engage. These four programs are developed with input from women who face fundamental barriers to civic engagement based on social, economic, political, caregiving, and time constraints. They are designed to meet women at different stages of their civic learning journeys and serve as a pipeline to opportunities through which women can grow and gain more experience.

### Pilot Phase:

**Civic Workshops:** The Workshops connect women with information, education, and networks to spark their civic journey:

- Develop supportive spaces for women to network and build collective power
- Provide culturally competent curricula about topics including local government, advocacy, community organizing, mutual aid, community boards, and more with accompanying resources

- Research and develop innovative and different approaches to civic education
- Provide supportive services and incentives for participation
- Engage a team with extensive community experience to lead the curriculum process, collaborate with participants, and support all aspects of delivering culturally competent workshops

### In Development:

**Civic Hub:** The Hub will provide an accessible online platform where all New Yorkers can discover the city's civic life, find toolkits and how-tos that showcase ways to take action, and connect with other organizations. WCC will:

- Curate content from NYC government agencies, nonprofits, and community sources
- Create content for women that fills gaps in what exists
- Update and integrate **WCC's Citywide Guide to Services and Resources in New York** (The Guide). Recognizing that the barriers to civic engagement relate to a web of challenges and social issues, the guide helps individuals and organizations access low- or no-cost social services, programs, and resources throughout the five boroughs of New York City<sup>166</sup>
- Provide context and action-oriented opportunities to get involved, including community projects, voting, advocacy campaigns, contacting elected officials, protesting, participatory budgeting, mutual aid, and more

### Upcoming:

**Civic Fellowships:** The Fellowships will provide professional development opportunities and focus on specific policy areas to provide practical education, access to networking, and tools to identify and implement solutions. WCC will provide cohort-based civic learning focused on a particular social issue or civic engagement problem and enable deeper engagement.

**Civic Leadership Institute:** In partnership with a university, the Institute will connect women with leadership development programs, civic engagement opportunities, women mentors, and skills-based learning experiences.

**Civic Matters Outcomes:** The intended outcomes of Civic Matters (provided in Appendix 7) are to increase knowledge and awareness about civic participation and processes; expand confidence and motivation to engage; provide opportunities for gaining advocacy experience and practice; and foster and develop a women's civic engagement community with new relationships and a growing network of participants. Over time, more women will engage civically and share information with their families, take action to influence civic and community processes and outcomes (from voting to participatory budgeting to community organizing), and become civic and community leaders. Women will be able to advocate for their needs and achieve more equitable social and financial support. In the short term, WCC will help to increase access and awareness to information and decision-making spaces, with the longer-term goal of shifting the power dynamics of these spaces to the people who have been most excluded, primarily Black, Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic, Latinx, low-income, immigrant, LGBTQ, disabled, incarcerated, primary caregivers, wage workers, and gender non-conforming or non-binary individuals.

**Outreach and Engagement:** Partnership is key for WCC to reach and retain participants. WCC is developing an outreach plan to partner with trusted CBOs in communities with low civic engagement indicators (such as voting and census participation). WCC is directly asking potential participants about their interests, experiences, and needs.<sup>167</sup> Collaborations are meant to be complementary to existing programs as WCC seeks to support organizations that want to add civic engagement to their services. WCC will also provide support for participants aimed at removing barriers and encouraging engagement, which may include MetroCards, meals, language interpretation, ASL interpretation, childcare, certificates, and stipends.

**Across all of WCC's partnerships, coalition memberships, and collaborations with individual women, WCC seeks to amplify, support, and highlight partners who transfer power to women who are currently excluded from political decision-making.**

**Program Design and Evaluation:** Evaluation is built into all of WCC's program work, from design through assessment. Civic Matters grew out of a developmental evaluation. Our evaluation approach includes ideation, planning, implementation, assessment, and revision prioritizing learning, listening, and improving. An important part of evaluation is ensuring that the curriculum is culturally responsive. In the future, self-selecting participant leaders will receive stipends for their time as they shape and contribute to program design and evaluation.

## Policy

Our programmatic work is complemented by our policy work in order to ensure and create equitable access to democratic processes and continually hold institutions accountable for historical (and present-day) injustices. For more than a century, WCC has engaged with elected officials, met with private funders, and rallied alongside community leaders to establish programs and policies that improve the quality of life of New Yorkers. WCC members have supported striking garment workers, criticized unjust housing developments, endorsed bills that outlaw discrimination, and marched for civil rights.<sup>168</sup> Today, WCC is building on established relationships with local and state representatives, partnerships with community organizations and nonprofits, and connections to other civic institutions as part of our mission to ensure just and equitable civic engagement processes.

Taking on systemic inequity in civic engagement requires policymaking, effective programs, and partnerships. This includes efforts to expand voting rights, improve census engagement, ensure fair redistricting processes, and protect the right to protest.



**WCC supports policies that directly connect to our mission to incorporate historically and presently excluded voices in our political processes. WCC's policy agenda prioritizes:**

- 1. Improving public participation in government and in communities**
- 2. Protecting constitutional and legal rights to civic engagement**
- 3. Preventing public and private efforts to limit civic participation**

WCC focuses policy on systems change in New York City and State while also supporting relevant federal legislation. We advocate for reforms that make it easier to vote, including the voting process (such as no-excuse “vote by mail”); voter registration (like same-day registration); and expanding and protecting voting rights. As an extension of WCC’s early members’ advocating for women’s suffrage, WCC is focusing on expanding

the right to vote with particular attention to the Our City, Our Vote campaign that would allow permanent residents who are not citizens to vote in municipal elections<sup>169</sup> and to the restoration and re-enfranchisement of voting rights to people on parole.<sup>170</sup> In addition, WCC conducted outreach and education for the 2020 Census focusing on women’s participation. Women (and members of their households) are part of historically undercounted populations.<sup>171</sup> We are now working to make sure these same populations are recognized and represented in the redistricting process.

Alongside the tireless efforts of women activists and leaders, WCC hopes to continue and deepen partnerships by participating in and contributing to coalitions, lending our media platform to advocacy campaigns, and galvanizing our supporters to take action.





# CONCLUSION

**Women are often leaders in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities and have made considerable contributions to civic processes and advocacy.**

However, many Black, Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic, Latinx, low-income, immigrant, LGBTQ, disabled, incarcerated, primary caregivers, wage workers, and gender non-conforming or non-binary individuals continue to face significant barriers to civic participation. WCC's research presented some of these barriers and offered opportunities for all sectors to increase civic participation for women and work collectively toward a more just and equitable democracy.

**New York City has the opportunity to be a national model for inclusive civic education and engagement. The recommendations are only a starting point to improve civic processes and begin remedying systemic and historical injustices.**

By sharing lessons from our strategic planning process, WCC encourages our partners across sectors to join us in recognizing the urgency of improving women's pathways to civic engagement and collectively support initiatives to increase women's participation and leadership in community and political decision-making processes. Our process is iterative, and WCC is committed to learning and listening, growing, and evolving—and considers these essential elements of creating change.





# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: WCC DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

What Do You Need to Know?	Why?	Evaluation Questions
<b>In light of how you will use the findings, what information do you require that you do not already have?</b>	<b>Why do you need this information? Which uses will it inform?</b>	<b>What questions must the data answer?</b>
WCC needs to clarify who it will engage programmatically (i.e., target population—women) and strategically (i.e., ally organizations that may also act as bridges to the target population).	Understanding constituents—target population and ally organizations—will help WCC develop programs and services to support women’s civic and political participation in New York City.	<b>Q1. Who are our constituents (i.e., target population—the women and their ally organizations we want to impact, organizations we want to ally with), and why? Who else might be affected by the work of WCC directly or indirectly?</b>
WCC wants greater insights into the context it seeks to affect: women (and their families), those who are underrepresented or marginalized by inequity, in particular, and their civic and political participation in New York City.	Understanding both the context of civic and political participation in New York City and our target population’s experiences within this context will aid WCC in building alliances with organizations and developing programs and services that support New York City women’s civic and political participation.	<b>Q2. What is the current context of New York City women’s civic and political participation?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is our target population’s personal and collective history of civic and political participation?</li> <li>• What are our constituents’ perceptions of the civic and political process and the target population’s engagement with the process?</li> </ul>
WCC seeks to understand the positive and negative forces that shape the target population’s civic and political engagement in New York City; what ally organizations may be doing to either leverage supporting forces or address barriers; and opportunities for targeted WCC programming and services.	Refer to the statement above.	<b>Q3. What factors support our target population’s access to civic and political participation? What barriers to civic and political participation do our target populations face?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our ally organizations (or other organizations) doing to leverage these positive factors and address the barriers?</li> <li>• What improvements are needed to increase civic and political engagement?</li> <li>• What programmatic steps should WCC take? What types of services will WCC offer? Hub? Community workshops? Fellowship? Institute? How will women engage with WCC? Will the programmatic elements we have outlined align with our target population’s needs?</li> </ul>
WCC seeks to know what issues are most important to its target population.	Understanding the issues that are most salient to its target population will aid in developing programs and services that target the civic and political motivations and aspirations of the women it seeks to impact.	<b>Q4. What community, local, state, and national issues are most salient to the target population, and why?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does our target population currently address these issues or envision its role in addressing them, and why? Who else needs to be involved – how and why?</li> </ul>
WCC seeks to understand its potential influence on constituents and what success will look like in the short and long term.	Understanding where WCC can have an impact that will inform its strategic direction, programmatic development, and ongoing learning.	<b>Q5. Where are the opportunities for WCC to impact its constituents? What does success look like for constituents in the short and long term?</b>

## APPENDIX 2: LISTENING TOUR ORGANIZATIONS

WCC reached out, met with, and listened to diverse views from civic and community leaders, advocacy organizations, businesses, and elected officials across New York City to better understand their unique perspectives on the issues most important to the women of New York City. We share this list that represents highlights of our outreach, and we recognize that there are many other organizations providing important civic leadership.

Adhikaar  
The Advocacy Institute  
Ambassadora  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City  
The Center  
Citizens' Committee for Children  
City University of New York  
Civic Hall  
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women  
Columbia University, School of International  
and Public Affairs  
Community Voices Heard  
Coro New York  
Daly Gonzalez  
DemocracyNYC  
Drexel University  
FPWA  
Fund for the City of New York  
Gender Avenger  
Generation Citizen  
Girl Scouts of Greater New York  
Grace Institute  
Graham Windham  
Hot Bread Kitchen  
Housing Plus  
iCivics  
Latina Leaders Network  
League of Women Voters of New York City

Make the Road New York  
Manhattan Chamber of Commerce  
Ms. Foundation for Women  
Muslim Community Network  
NAACP New York State Conference  
New York Cares  
New York Community Trust  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York State Mentoring Program  
The New York Women's Foundation  
Next Generation Politics  
Nonprofit New York  
NYC Census  
NYC Civic Engagement Commission  
NYC Commission on Gender Equity  
NYC Council Women's Caucus  
NYC Department of Education  
Office of the Governor of New York  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor of New York  
Office of the Manhattan Borough President  
Office of the New York City Comptroller  
Partnership for New York City  
PowHer  
Right Question Institute  
Skadden Foundation  
Spark Collective  
Sy Syms Foundation  
Trillium Asset Management  
United Nations  
United Neighborhood Houses  
The Wing  
WNBA  
Women.NYC  
Women Online  
Women'sActivism.NYC  
YWCA Brooklyn

### APPENDIX 3: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

In 2018, WCC conducted a landscape analysis exploring WCC's past work—and the work of others—so that we could identify a relevant and meaningful path forward. WCC researched and examined what others are doing effectively and where gaps in addressing women's needs exist. Our focus was on organizations working in the spaces of civic education, voter engagement, women and civic engagement, and women and girls. We share this list in recognition that it represents only part of women and civic engagement organizations.

92StreetY Women in Power  
A Better Balance  
All in Together Campaign (AIT)  
Ambassadora  
Amplify Her NYC  
Barnard's Civic Engagement Program  
Bella Abzug Leadership Institute  
The Broad Room  
Catalyst  
Center for American Progress  
Center for an Urban Future  
Center for Educational Equity, Teachers College  
Center for Law and Social Justice  
The Center for New York City Affairs at The New School  
The Center for Popular Democracy/Action  
Center for Tech and Civic Life  
Center for the Women of New York (CWNY)  
Citizens Union  
Civically Re-Engaged Women (CREW)  
Civic Hall  
Civic Nation  
Civic Spirit  
Coalition for Educational Justice  
Common Cause New York  
CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies  
Dare to Run  
Day One

Demos  
Directions for Our Youth, Inc.  
Eleanor's Legacy  
Ellevest  
Emerge New York  
Emily's List  
Empire Justice Center  
FPWA  
Generation Citizen  
Girl Be Heard  
Girl Scouts of Greater New York  
Girl Vow, Inc.  
Girls for a Change  
Girls for Gender Equity (GGE)  
Girls Inc.  
Girls Leadership  
Girls Write Now, Inc.  
Grace Institute  
HeForShe  
Higher Heights  
Indivisible  
The Jewish Vote  
The Kota Alliance  
Ladies Get Paid  
Let NY Vote  
Lower Eastside Girls Club  
Make the Road New York  
Motivote  
Ms. Foundation for Women  
National Association of Women Business Owners  
National Center for Science & Civic Engagement  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Organization for Women (NOW)  
National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA),  
We Lead  
New Women New Yorkers  
New York Communities for Change  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York Junior League  
New York Public Interest Research Group

New York Women's Chamber of Commerce  
 New York Women's Foundation  
 NGO Committee on the Status of Women  
 Office of Civic Engagement and Social Justice at  
 The New School  
 People for the American Way  
 Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts  
 Planned Parenthood NYC Votes PAC  
 Planned Parenthood of Greater New York  
 PowerHer  
 Public Allies  
 Queens Women's Business Center (QWBC)  
 Rally+Rise  
 Reboot Democracy  
 ROC United  
 Sadie Nash Leadership Project  
 Sakhi  
 South Asian Council for Social Services  
 Step Up for Students  
 Supermajority  
 Take the Lead  
 Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University  
 United Neighborhood Houses  
 UN Women  
 Vision 2020  
 Voices of Women  
 Vote Pro Choice  
 VoteRunLead  
 WAM!NYC  
 Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls  
 WIN NYC  
 WOC for Progress  
 Women in Derivatives (WIND)  
 Women.NYC  
 Women's Center for Education and  
 Career Advancement

Women's Forum of New York  
 Women's Organizing Network  
 Women's Venture Fund  
 Womxn's Health and Reproductive Rights (WHARR)  
 Youth Progressive Policy Group  
 YVote  
 YWCA  
 Zonta Club of New York

## APPENDIX 4: WCC SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR PEER ORGANIZATIONS

WCC designed a [questionnaire on the state of women's civic engagement](#) across New York City to gather information to help us define and design the work we would undertake. The survey was issued to more than 100 peer organizations.

## APPENDIX 5: WCC SURVEY RESPONDENTS<sup>172</sup>

The table below provides the names of 18 of the 26 organizations that responded to the developmental evaluation survey and consented to have the name of their organizations listed as survey respondents.

Adhikaar	CUNY
American Indian Community House	Her Justice
Apicha Community Health Care	League of Women Voters of New York State
Bella Abzug Leadership Institute	LiveOn NY
Citizens Union	New York Cares
Civically Re-Engaged Women (CREW)	Riverside Language Program
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women	United Neighborhood Houses
Columbia University	Women Online
Coro New York Leadership Center	YWCA Brooklyn



## APPENDIX 6: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FORCES ON WOMEN'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN NYC<sup>173</sup>

The table below provides a detailed description of the forces identified by the women who participated in the four focus groups.

### Women's Focus Group Data: Positive and Negative Forces on Women's Civic Engagement in New York City

Positive or Enabling Forces	Negative or Disabling Forces
<p>Easily accessible and relatable information relevant to civic engagement in NYC in diverse languages addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How local government works</li> <li>• How to vote and when (calendar of important civic engagement dates in NYC)</li> <li>• How to get involved civically in NYC</li> <li>• Politicians, their policies, and efforts in the community</li> <li>• Political candidates and their platforms</li> </ul>	<p>Low socioeconomic status or other precarious or insecure status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay gaps and financial barriers</li> <li>• Language barriers</li> <li>• Lack of access to formal education</li> <li>• Immigrant/migrant status</li> <li>• Age barriers</li> </ul>
<p>Family and community support systems that value women and their contributions.</p>	<p>Social and cultural norms that hold women back:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of personal confidence and self-esteem and unable to move beyond traditional perceptions and norms</li> <li>• Families and communities that are not supportive of women's contributions outside of the home or in leadership roles</li> <li>• Male privilege and systemic power structures that marginalize women and non-white males (e.g., patriarchy, sexism, racism, ableism, white supremacy)</li> <li>• Victim blaming</li> </ul>
<p>Women's groups or networks that offer safe spaces to gather, share, and celebrate women.</p>	<p>Lack of government transparency and accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionable allocation of public funds</li> <li>• Polarizing political climate</li> <li>• Policies rooted in white supremacy</li> </ul>
<p>Free skill-building programs, mentorships, or workshops dedicated to and designed for women that are culturally sensitive and ethnically diverse (with a focus on shared experiences).</p>	<p>Programs and training opportunities with criteria that can limit access to women: for example, women are either too well educated (beyond a GED) or not low-income enough to qualify.</p>
<p>CBOs, nonprofits, and individuals in NYC committed to systems-level change that support women or communities marginalized economically, politically, socially, and environmentally.</p>	<p>Work/life balance: The focus is on meeting families' immediate needs (paid work, housing, food, clothing) and children's educational needs, which leaves little time or energy for civic engagement, especially when opportunities are not designed for families.</p>
<p>NYC (or New York State) policies that support communities and women and marginalized populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYC Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave</li> </ul>	<p>Lacking a deeper, contextualized understanding of communities; lacking analysis of community needs that are also culturally sensitive or appropriate. Examples of this include outreach, programs, or service formats that may work in one geography or with one ethnic community but not in another context.</p>
<p>Technology to simplify civic engagement: connecting with other people or groups or accessing information via technology.</p>	

## APPENDIX 7: WCC THEORY OF CHANGE

OBJECTIVES	Center the needs of women who face the most oppression		Partner with CBOs to offer resources, tools, networks, information, and support	Create community for women to find their civic power and become more engaged	Advocate for policies that center women’s needs and eliminate systemic barriers to political participation	
PROGRAMS & POLICY	Hub	Workshops	Fellowship	Leadership Institute	Policy	
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curate content from NYC government agencies, verified nonprofits, and community sources</li><li>• Create content for women that fills gaps in what already exists</li><li>• Provide context and ways to get involved including: community projects, voting, advocacy campaigns, contacting elected officials, protesting, participatory budgeting, mutual aid, and more</li><li>• Update and integrate WCC’s Citywide Guide to Social Services</li><li>• Amplify, support, and highlight partner organizations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide low-stress and supportive spaces for women to network and build collective power</li><li>• Provide culturally competent curricula (context, content, conversation, and action) and corresponding toolkits</li><li>• Continuously research and learn about different approaches to civic education</li><li>• Provide incentives and supportive services for participation</li><li>• Amplify, support, and highlight partner organizations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide cohort-based civic learning focused on a particular social issue or civic engagement problem</li><li>• Enable deeper engagement on one issue that each cohort will identify and select</li><li>• Provide incentives and supportive services for participation</li><li>• Amplify, support, and highlight partner organizations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer leadership development opportunities, political and civic engagement, a network of women leaders, and skills based learning experiences</li><li>• Provide incentives and supportive services for participation</li><li>• Amplify, support, and highlight partner organizations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner with CBOs and co-develop priorities with program participants</li><li>• Focus on policies that make it easier for marginalized women to participate</li><li>• Improve public participation in government and in communities</li><li>• Amplify, support, and highlight partner organizations</li></ul>	
SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	Increased knowledge and awareness about civic participation and processes	Women feel that they have agency, support, and encouragement to activate their civic voice	Women have connected with like minded women or supportive communities	Women are able/ prepared to take a civic action	Women have recruited others to engage civically and access information	Women are sharing issues and policy areas that matter to them
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES	Increased advocacy and activism in NYC fighting injustice	Organizes and teaches others to spread knowledge and shape policies	More women are engaged in broader civic engagement and standing up for themselves and their communities	Increased participation in civic processes like voting and the census	Shifting attitudes and behaviors among participants and their communities	Women have increased access to information, support and civic spaces
LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	Women have increased ownership of decision making spaces	Greater accountability for institutions (government, schools, nonprofits)	Women have more social, educational, and economic resources	Policy changes within institutions		
WCC Vision: A just and equitable New York City in which all women are civically engaged.						



# GLOSSARY

**Census:** A count or survey of a population that collects various details about individuals and families with the goal of counting a country's entire population. In the United States, a census is completed every 10 years at the start of each decade, the first conducted in 1790. It is mandated in Article 1 Section 2 of the Constitution and determines the apportionment of legislative seats and the amount of resources and funding allocated to communities.<sup>174</sup>

**Cisheteropatriarchy:** A system of society in which cisgender men and heterosexuals (especially heterosexual men) are privileged, dominant, and hold power.<sup>175</sup>

**Civic:** Pertaining to the status, responsibilities, and privileges of membership in a community, usually in relation to an individual's documented residency in a locality.<sup>176</sup>

**Civic Education:** "The processes that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities. It is not limited to schooling, as it is a lifelong process."<sup>177</sup>

**Civic Engagement:** WCC defines civic engagement as the set of behaviors, attitudes, and actions related to participation in one's community in pursuit of equity, accountability, wellness, and justice. The outcome of improved civic engagement is a democracy that meets everyone's basic needs and ensures all community members have the power, tools, and skills to participate in collective decision-making.

**Civil Rights:** An enforceable right or privilege, which if interfered with by another person gives rise to an action for injury.<sup>178</sup> They guarantee "equal social opportunities and equal protection under the law, regardless of race, religion, or other personal characteristics."<sup>179</sup>

**Community-Based Organization (CBO):** Public or private organizations that represent a community or significant segments of a community and provide direct educational or related services to individuals in the community.<sup>180</sup>

**Community Board:** In New York City, local representative bodies where board members are appointed by borough presidents. Community boards serve as advocates for their neighborhoods. The main responsibility of board offices is managing complaints from

community residents. Many boards may "choose to provide additional services and manage special projects that cater to specific community needs, including organizing tenants' associations, coordinating neighborhood cleanup programs, and more."<sup>181</sup> Community boards "assess the needs of their community members and meet with City agencies to make recommendations in the City's budget process."<sup>182</sup>

**Community Engagement:** The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle to engage the community and achieve long-term and sustainable outcomes, processes, relationships, discourse, decision-making, or implementation. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices.<sup>183</sup> It decenters formal political institutions, such as local government, and emphasizes the capacities and abilities of women and families to lead group decision-making.<sup>184</sup>

**Democracy:** A system of government governed through direct participation or fair representation by elected officials.<sup>185</sup>

**Early Voting:** A democratic process that allows citizens to vote prior to Election Day. Early voting gives voters more flexibility to vote based on their own schedules and creates shorter voting lines, all to increase voter turnout.<sup>186</sup>

**Equality:** Equality is a set of conditions created by laws, social and cultural norms, and the distribution of economic resources in which individuals or groups are given the same or "equal" rights, liberties, status, and access to certain goods and services regardless of individual need.<sup>187</sup>

**Equity:** Equity, similar to equality, is a set of conditions created by laws, social and cultural norms, and the distribution of economic resources, which takes into account the different circumstances of different people and groups, and distributes various amounts of aid needed to reach equal outcomes in comparison to other individuals/groups. It focuses on providing equal opportunities and aims to address the disparities in our social system.<sup>188</sup>

**Gender:** A social and cultural construct where a range of characteristics are attributed to women/girls and men/boys. These characteristics include norms, behaviors, and roles.<sup>189</sup>

**Gender Non-conforming:** A term for those who do not conform to gender stereotypes. Often an umbrella for non-binary genders. It is important to respect and use the terms people use for themselves, regardless of any prior associations or ideas about those terms.<sup>190</sup>

**Gerrymandering:** The manipulation of district boundaries in order to establish an unfair political advantage in favor of one's political party/group.<sup>191</sup>

**Intersectionality:** Coined by legal and critical race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw and can be defined as “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.” When feminism recognizes this intersectional framework, the feminist movement can become more inclusive and allow all women of different races, economic standings, religions, identities, and orientations to have their voices heard.<sup>192</sup>

**Movement Building:** “The process of organizing and helping to activate the determination and capacity of people and organizations to work individually or collectively toward a vision they all share.” It vests its power in people and organizations so they mobilize wherever they need to.<sup>193</sup>

**Mutual Aid:** Work in social movements to directly support community members' survival needs, such as food and rent assistance, based on the shared understanding that the crises communities face are worsened by systemic violence, discrimination, and oppression toward those communities.<sup>194</sup>

**Non-binary:** Gender identity and/or spectrum of gender identities that do not conform to only the “male” or “female,” or “man” or “woman” identity.<sup>195</sup>

**Participatory Budgeting:** A democratic process where members of the community, including people under the voting age of 18, vote on where to allocate parts of the public budget. It funds public infrastructure projects, such as improvements in schools, parks, and libraries.<sup>196</sup>

**Patriarchy:** A social system and organization in which male supremacy operates at the expense of women and other individuals. Men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property.<sup>197</sup>

**Racial Justice:** The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It acknowledges the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.<sup>198</sup>

**Redistricting:** The process by which new congressional and state district lines are drawn and divided. This occurs every 10 years after the Census. New Census data is used to redraw legislative district lines, apportion legislative seats, and determine geographical areas receiving public resources and funding.<sup>199</sup>

**Social Justice:** An analysis of how power, privilege, and oppression impact our experience of our social identities. “Full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable.” All members of a space, a community, an institution, or a society are “physically and psychologically safe and secure.”<sup>200</sup>

**Systemic:** Pertaining to practices, roles, privileges, and attitudes embedded into the normal, everyday practices within a society.<sup>201</sup>

**White Privilege:** “Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white.”<sup>202</sup>

**White Supremacy:** The political, cultural, and economic system in which white people overwhelmingly hold power and control material resources. Conscious and unconscious ideas about white superiority and supremacy are widespread. Relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are a daily occurrence across a broad array of institutions and social settings.<sup>203</sup>



# ENDNOTES



- 1 External reviewers' participation does not constitute an endorsement of the content of this paper.
- 2 Key terms are bold and underlined when they first appear and linked to the Glossary at the end of the document, but please note that the Glossary applies to the whole document.
- 3 "US Hate Crime Highest in More than a Decade – FBI," BBC, November 17, 2020, <https://cutt.ly/dxHNGau>.
- 4 "Developmental evaluation provides evaluative information and feedback to social innovators, and their funders and supporters, to inform adaptive development of change initiatives in complex dynamic environments. Developmental evaluation brings to innovation and adaptation the process of asking evaluative questions, applying evaluative logic, and gathering and reporting evaluative data, to inform and support the development of innovative projects, programs, initiatives, products, organizations, and/or systems change efforts with timely feedback." Michael Quinn Patton, Kate McKegg, and Nan Wehipeihana, "Developmental Evaluation Exemplars: Principles in Practice," in *Developmental Evaluation Exemplars: Principles in Practice*, New York: The Guilford Press, 2016, p. V.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Terms that are underlined in the Executive Summary and Introduction are linked to the Glossary at the end of the document, but note that the Glossary applies to the whole document.
- 7 Until the 1960s, three courses in civics and government were common in American high schools. In 1961, urbanist Jane Jacobs was already describing the lacking sense of "togetherness" in New York City neighborhoods in her seminal *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In *Bowling Alone*, political scientist Robert Putnam attributed this decline to the breakdown of the traditional American family, the legal desegregation of civic life, and the growth of big government. Putnam also suggests the movement of women from the home into the paid labor force created less time, more economic demands, and more personal demands managing two-career families, leaving fewer women with time to organize civic activities.
- 8 "Latinx" is a contested gender-neutral term of unclear origin referring to people from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries in response to the gendered U.S. Census designation "Latino." A 2019 Pew survey identified that only 23% of U.S. adults who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino have heard of the term Latinx, and 3% say they use it to describe themselves. Usage in this paper is determined by primary source data; Luis Noe-Bustamante, Lauren Mora, and Mark Hugo Lopez, "About One-in-Four U.S. Hispanics Have Heard of Latinx, but Just 3% Use It," Pew Research Center, August 11, 2020, <https://cutt.ly/dvZhR4t>.
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