

YWCA Delaware Advocacy Positions

Guiding Principle

YWCA Delaware's mission is to eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. We advocate for community action, public policies and practices that improve economic security, health, safety, and social equity for women and their families with particular attention to the issues that impact people of color.

Focus 2020

Racial Justice

End the criminalization of people of color

- **Racial and Ethnic Profiling** violates the U.S. Constitution's core promises of equal protection under the law and freedom from unreasonable searches as seizures; nonetheless, the practice persists in law enforcement. YWCA DE supports efforts to bring an end to racial profiling such as law enforcement training on inherent bias and bias-free investigative techniques, systematized data collection on police activities, transparency in access to raw data for outside analysis and procedures for handling complaints.
- **School Discipline/School to Prison Pipeline** - Zero tolerance and other harsh disciplinary policies for minor misbehaviors disproportionately affect youth of color and consequently contribute to higher drop-out rates, court involvement and juvenile detention of those youth. YWCA DE supports policies that facilitate trauma-informed schools and restorative over punitive discipline practices to preserve a student's opportunity to quality education.
- **Mass Incarceration** - The United States has the largest prison population in the world per capita and Delaware mirrors national statistics in the disproportionate incarceration rates of people of color. Women of color are the fastest growing prison population. YWCA DE supports decreasing the prison population by reducing sentences for low-level crimes, court diversion programs, early intervention for at-risk youth and re-entry programs that enable the formerly incarcerated to successfully transition to productive citizenship.

Civil Rights

Full participation in civil and political life without discrimination or repression

- **Voting Rights** - Voting is a right of citizens and cornerstone of U.S. democracy. YWCA DE supports low-barrier identification requirements and accessibility such as same day voter registration and no-excuse early voting.
- **Census** - The Census count determines distribution to states of Federal funds for public benefit, provides the basis for reapportioning Congressional seats and redistricting. Historically, marginalized populations are undercounted due to language barriers, distrust of government intentions or other misinformation. Undercounts disproportionately impact the quality of life

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and democratic representation of underrepresented populations. YWCA DE supports efforts to ensure all Delaware residents are counted in the Census.

Gender Based Violence

YWCA DE will advance victims' ability to get and stay safe. We recognize factors such as race, sexual orientation, disability status or any combination of marginalization that can heighten the risk of violence for women and girls and barriers to their safety.

- **Reauthorize** Federal programs VAWA (Violence against Women Act), FVPSA (Family Violence Prevention & Services Act), & VOCA (Victims of Crime Act)
- Enhance criminal penalties for those that engage in **human trafficking** and protections for victims of trafficking. Educate and train professionals in the medical, law enforcement, social services, community-based victims services and high-risk industries on identification and response to victims.
- Victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, human trafficking or other abuse have a right to **confidentiality**
- Ensure **access to legal, medical** or other needs without jeopardizing employment status after experiencing sexual or domestic violence

Economic Opportunity

Improve the economic well-being of women and their families

- **Education Equity** - An equitable education system helps all students develop the knowledge and skills they need to become engaged and productive members of society. Access to post-secondary education and graduation substantially increases earning potential. YWCA supports equitable design, practices and resourcing in education to ensure women, people of color and other marginalized populations are successful.
- **Pay Equity** – A gender pay gap exists and while occupation choice and caregiving time away from work accounts statistically for some of the gap, there is still a meaningful portion that research attributes to gender and racial discrimination. Fair scheduling practices, paid sick days, and access to affordable, high-quality child care can help to minimize the gap.
- **Sexual Harassment** – Workplace harassment affects women's economic security and advancement and can be compounded by its intersection with racial and other discriminations in the workplace. YWCA DE supports education of employees on their rights and recourses, access to those recourses when their rights have been violated and employer accountability for prevention, intervention and redress.