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 attention to the issues that affect people of color.

Priorities 2022

Racial Justice

➢ Law Enforcement Reform
  • People of color in America are policed at double the rate of their white counterparts. Rates of stop, arrest and officer-involved shootings are disproportionate for Black and brown individuals and especially prevalent in poor communities. YWCA DE supports reforms that dismantle individual bias and systemic racism in policing through transparency and accountability.

➢ Criminal Justice Reform
  • In Delaware, 21 percent of the population are Black but represent more than 60 percent of the prison population, with women of color the fastest growing demographic. YWCA DE advocates for policies that decrease the prison population such as reducing sentences for low-level crimes, eliminating compounding fines and fees that disproportionately effect lower income Black and brown populations, early intervention for at-risk youth and court diversion programs.

Civil Rights

➢ Voting Access
  • YWCA DE recognizes that voting is a fundamental right of any citizen and that threats to voting rights are a threat to the cornerstone of our democracy. YWCA advocates for policies that make voting more accessible to everyone who has the right to vote such as same day voter registration, vote by mail, and no excuse absentee ballots.

Education Equity

➢ School Funding
  • The percentage of Black students prepared for and graduating from post-secondary schools remain significantly less than the percentage of white students. Inequities in learning supports create an achievement gap by race further exacerbated by the economic health of the communities where families live. YWCA DE believes every student deserves equitable access to quality education, culturally sensitive and situationally appropriate learning supports.

➢ School Health Resources
  • Many students come to school with complex physical and mental health concerns or social service needs. Access to school-based health services helps to create a positive school climate, prevents worsening of mental health conditions, and leads to better education outcomes for students. Black and brown children have a disproportionate risk of experiencing mental health disorders connected with traumatic stress, which
is exacerbated by bias in school disciplinary policies. YWCA DE supports enhanced access to school-based health services, trauma-informed schools and restorative discipline practices.

Health & Safety

- **Body Worn Cameras**
  - YWCA supports the use of body worn cameras by law enforcement as was recently signed into state law; however, we acknowledge the sensitive intersection of ensuring the safety of victims of violence and the right to racial and social justice that the law can provide. We encourage that the points of view of victims of domestic and sexual violence be incorporated when developing the policies and procedures for implementation of the law.

- **Gender Based Violence**
  - NNEDV studies confirm that financial abuse occurs in 99% of abusive relationships and is the main reason survivors return to abusive partners. Expansion of PFA (Protection from Abuse) order to include financial abuse will help empower survivors to leave their abuser and can offer access to economic reliefs such as child support, mortgage or rent assistance, and temporary possession of property.

- **Health Equity**
  - The overall health disparities resulting from systemic racism can be explained by the social determinants of health in which the quality of life and health status are fundamentally linked to economic status and educational attainment. YWCA DE supports policies that address disparities in social determinants of health and ensures low-barrier access to quality healthcare in low-income communities in which people of color are overrepresented, cultural competency and implicit bias education for all those working in the healthcare system, and enhanced maternal health options for women of color including pre- and post-natal support.

Economic Opportunity

- **Childcare & Early Education**
  - Childcare and early learning programs are essential supports for working women and our nation’s economic future. The COVID-19 pandemic escalated already-existing barriers to women’s economic participation, inequities for women and families of color, and capacity challenges of childcare providers. YWCA DE supports an equitable, sustainable childcare infrastructure that meets the needs of all women, families, and childcare providers and supports funding of Universal Pre-K.

- **Wealth Building**
  - The lack of community economic development in neighborhoods with low homeownership and high foreclosure rates, lack of affordable housing, limited access to financial services, living wage or better employment and entrepreneurial investment exacerbate wealth inequality and disproportionately affect communities of color. YWCA DE support policies that provide investment in depressed communities with community-informed solutions to increase income opportunity, housing stability, access to affordable housing and mainstream financial services and education.