



HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION ON

# Women & Girls

## *“A Seat at the Table”*

Report and Recommendations  
to the Board of County Commissioners & Community



October 11, 2018

## The 2018 Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls

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**Special thanks to the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation** for sponsoring facilitation and providing support to the Hamilton County Commission on Women & Girls.

**The following individuals and organizations also supported the 2018 Commission on Women & Girls. We thank them for their contributions.**

Jennifer Brady	Hamilton County Public Health	Meghan Cummings
Trina Jackson	Hamilton County Board of Elections	Kate Hanisian
Peg Moertl	The Art Museum of Cincinnati	Sarah Corlett
Rithu Rajagopala	Walnut Hills High School	Kait Bell
Allison Puchala	Design Impact	Vanessa Freytag
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Dr. Amy C. Lind	The Honorable Judge Heather Russell	Susan Marrs
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Dawn Wolfe & her	State School Board Member Patricia Bruns	Susan Noonan
WHHS students	Green Township Trustee Roseanne Stertz	Christopher Nicak
	Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus & her staff, Alex Linser and Nate Simon	Stephanie Bellamah

**Thank you** to all of the women, girls, men, and boys, who agreed to be interviewed.

**Thank you** to the **Hamilton County Commissioners**, Todd Portune, Denise Driehaus, and Chris Monzel for creating the Commission on Women & Girls.



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## Executive Summary

We find ourselves at a moment in time for women in society. All around us, in the news, on social media, and even in the streets, women are making their voices heard, but real & sustained change only comes when women have a seat at the table.

While women make up 50% of the population, they do not enjoy equal representation in the institutions making decisions that influencing their live, careers, and well-being. When women don't have a seat at the table, it is difficult to accomplish things like:



- Achieving pay equity and employment opportunity across genders,
- Having more women in leadership positions, and
- Ensuring women & girls' health and safety

Women "having a seat at the table" means having empowered voices which are heard. It means keeping one's seat, being supported, and being influential. It means creating awareness of different perspectives and enhancing teachable moments. Organizations do better when women have a seat at the table.



This Commission was formed to give women a seat at the table, a powerful platform to help turn rhetoric into action. Over the past year, the Commission on Women and Girls employed a three step process to arrive at the recommendations in this report, as follows:

1. **Audit status:** identify gender exclusions, restrictions, and inequalities – based on experience, field interviews, and research.
2. **Interventions:** recommend ways to address disparities, & promote women & girls
3. **Assessment:** incorporate feedback, and ensure changes are sustainable.

We are excited for this opportunity to contribute to our community, and we look forward to working with community partners, companies, schools and governments to enact sustainable changes.





## **History and Process**

In 2017, Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus introduced a resolution to create Hamilton County's first Commission on Women & Girls. By a unanimous vote, the Board of County Commissioners established the Commission "to dismantle barriers that give rise to gender based inequities, to improve the economic position of all women in Hamilton County, to encourage the public recognition of the contributions of women to Hamilton County, and to develop and promote women in leadership positions throughout Hamilton County." The Board of County Commissioners gave the Commission on Women and Girls the following four objectives to fulfill that mission:



1. Making recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and local government jurisdictions to eliminate any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women, of human rights or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field;
2. Facilitating partnerships between government, nonprofit, and business, which will support the mission of the Commission on Women and Girls;
3. Promoting and encouraging women to seek leadership positions in society, and helping girls to develop leadership skills; and
4. Developing public information and/or education campaigns to support the mission of the Commission on Women and Girls.



We, the inaugural membership of the Commission on Women and Girls, were appointed by the Board of County Commissioners in December of 2017. We then set out on a ten month process to identify areas of focus, complete research, receive community feedback, and refine recommendations to satisfy the objectives from the Board of County Commissioners. A summary of that process and our recommendations follow below.

Given the broad mission of the Commission on Women and Girls, the first task was to identify areas of focus for the Commission's work. With facilitation from Design Impact in January 2018, the Commissioners used a "Design Thinking" process to draw upon their own experiences and identified the following areas of focus:



- 1. Promoting Women into Positions of Leadership**
- 2. Economic & Pay Equity**
- 3. Empowering Women's Voices**
- 4. Holistic Support**
- 5. Women & Girls' Safety**

The Commission organized itself in five subcommittees, each focused on one of these areas. Each subcommittee elected co-chairs comprised of women and girls to lead them in their work.



In February and March, every member of the Commission on Women and Girls interviewed at least three women, girls, boys, and men to gather personal stories relevant to their area of focus. At its March meeting, the Commission reviewed those personal stories and used the knowledge gained from the

interviews to refine their focus areas and identify opportunities where progress could be made.

Throughout April and May, the Commissioners conducted research into their particular areas of focus. They identified organizations in our community with expertise and experience, and met with them to learn about the programs that already exist in Hamilton County, and to gain a broader understanding of their subject.



At the May meeting, the subcommittees reviewed their research and interviews, and developed proposals to fill unmet needs in our community. The commissioners took the month of June to develop a public presentation of their ideas.





On July 19, 2018, the Commission on Women and Girls presented their ideas at a community forum at Walnut Hill High School. After the presentation, the community members who attended were invited to share feedback with each subcommittee. The subcommittees then refined their proposals based on that community input.

At the August meeting, the Commission reviewed all of the recommendations of each subcommittee, combined duplicative proposals, and voted to present the eight proposals contained in this report. Each subcommittee prepared a report of its findings and recommendations, which have been incorporated into this report.

Throughout the process, the members of the Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls engaged with elected officials, business owners, non-profits, and hundreds of community members to identify unmet needs in our community and develop proposals to meet those needs.



The table below contains the recommendations of the Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls. Some of the recommendations are policies which can be adopted by the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners. Other recommendations will require partnerships with outside agencies or other government entities, particularly school boards. Others still are recommendations that the next iteration of the Commission on Women & Girls will continue to research and develop.

In the pages that follow, each of the subcommittees have summarized their research and findings, and explained their recommendation in more detail. The reports contain the compelling personal stories and empirical data which support these recommendations.



## **Recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners**

1. Hamilton County should devote a standalone portion of the County Website for the Commission on Women & Girls. This will include updates on the work of the Commission, and information about existing programs offered by Hamilton County and area nonprofits. The website will contain women's stories of empowerment. The website will also include informational resources and connections to volunteer opportunities to support women's safety and empowerment. **(Empowering Voices, Women's Safety, Holistic Support)**
2. Hamilton County should create formalized policies to increase the number of women serving on boards and commissions, which can be replicated by other jurisdictions. **(Women in Leadership)**
3. Hamilton County should create incentives for businesses to adopt compensation practices that help eliminate pay disparities. The County could incentivize this behavior through the tax incentive packages developed by the Hamilton County Development Corporation to attract and retain businesses, or through developing purchasing policies to incentivize county contractors. **(Pay Equity)**

## **Recommendations to Develop Community Partnerships**

4. Our community would benefit from a public relations campaign to highlight positive stories from employers who adopt gender-based pay equity practices. This could take the form of a partnership with private businesses and nonprofits or as an initiative of an advocacy group or chamber of commerce. **(Pay Equity)**
5. Because prevention is essential to increasing safety for women and girls in the long term, area schools and community organizations would benefit by implementing healthy masculinity curricula. **(Women's Safety)**
6. Our community would benefit from a multi-age mentoring alliance, which includes peer-to-peer support, in order to build confidence in young girls during middle and high school. **(Holistic Support & Women in Leadership)**

## **Recommendations to the Next Commission on Women & Girls**

7. The Commission on Women and Girls should continue to assemble informational resources to assist and empower women in the workforce, which can be shared on the Commission's website. **(Empowering Voices)**
8. In researching prevention programs, the Commission found that there are several curricula available for high schools, but could not find specific healthy masculinity curricula available for younger children. Early intervention is key, and so the Commission should continue to search for health masculinity programs for younger children, and pursue a partnership to develop one if none exist. **(Women's Safety)**



## **Subcommittee Reports**

## Economic and Pay Equity Subcommittee

### “The Cash Queens”

#### Final Recommendations & Report

The Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls launched in January 2018 at the direction of County Commissioner Denise Driehaus with the intention of evaluating key issues affecting the quality of life, prosperity, and safety of women and girls in our community. Our subcommittee focused on economic and pay disparities that women and girls continually face and struggle to overcome in Hamilton County.

Our members self-selected this subcommittee and contributed a variety of perspectives and experiences:

- An African-American single mother who intimately knows the intersectionality of race and gender as it relates to obstacles for compensation parity and professional advancement.
- A corporate executive who has fiercely climbed the ladder at a local Fortune 100 company despite obstacles she has encountered due to her gender.
- A lesbian academic administrator who is acutely aware of discrepancies in compensation and benefits compared to her male counterparts in administration.
- A single professional who must rely on herself to provide for her future and retirement and is therefore focused on personal wealth and receiving the same opportunities as male peers.
- A Cincinnati high school student who has heard first-hand from her aunt about pay disparities and professional disadvantages due to gender.

While our subcommittee members walk different journeys in life, our shared commitment to advancing initiatives for women has brought us together with a common mission. Since officially convening in January as the “Cash Queens” subcommittee, we have completed a comprehensive research initiative evaluating the status of economic and pay equity for women and girls in Hamilton County, and several critical suggestions emerged that could help lead to parity in our community. We consulted with an economic expert at the UC Economics Center and evaluated research sponsored by The Women’s Fund at the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. One of our subcommittee members reached out to a local human resources trade organization to see if the industry was engaged with any efforts related to pay equity. A subcommittee member interviewed a women’s studies professor to get a historic perspective on this dynamic. We interviewed many, many women. Story after story recounted instances of pay discrepancies between female and male colleagues, occasions in which women were passed over for professional advancement because of their gender, and shocking accounts in which women were not offered the same bonus incentives as male counterparts. We discovered that in real and tangible ways,

this issue is affecting every woman you know – including your mother, your sister, your daughter, and your colleague.

The women we interviewed were generous with their time and transparency. But by in large, we discovered that others – human resources professionals, employers, and others in positions of authority – do not want to talk about this issue.

**This is the focus of our subcommittee’s primary recommendation: to propose and support strategies that open a community dialogue about this issue and incentivize local employers to begin addressing it.**

**I. The Issue – A Baseline Perspective**

Whether they know it or not, nearly every woman in Hamilton County is facing a series of challenges regarding economic and pay equity. By the year 2020, four in seven women in Greater Cincinnati are projected to work in occupations with a median wage that is inadequate to support a woman with one child without public assistance. A single parent with two children must earn around \$45,000 a year to cover basic family expenses. That’s equal to a full-time job earning \$22 an hour – nearly three times higher than the state’s minimum wage of \$8.30. And an alarming discovery involves the Cliff Effect, in which a woman is penalized with a loss of public assistance benefits when receiving a marginal raise. For example, if a woman receives a 90-cent raise and goes from making \$16.49 an hour to \$17.39 an hour, she will receive an annual raise of \$1,872 but loses public assistance benefits for childcare, leading to a net increase in costs of \$11,903. This cliff effect is especially pervasive within minority communities.

**THE CLIFF EFFECT**

<p>The Good News:</p> <p>A single mother receives a raise of 90¢ an hour</p> <p>The raise leads to an increase from \$16.49 an hour to \$17.39 an hour</p> <p>And an annual INCREASE of \$1872</p>	<p>The Bad News:</p> <p>The single mother loses her CHILDCARE BENEFITS</p> <p>And childcare costs will now be \$14,928</p> <p>Resulting in a net increase in COSTS of \$11,903</p>
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*\*Example based on a single mother with a preschooler and a school-aged child  
From The Women’s Fund PULSE Briefing: Women, Poverty, and Cliffs – August 15, 2012*

A member of our subcommittee interviewed Chris Nicak, the associate director of research at the UC Economics Center, which executed the economic pay study championed by The Women’s Fund. Nicak says that pay disparities exist even at the top echelons of professional achievement, including male and female doctors. Some of this



disparity is tied to self-selection of professions – a female may choose to go into pediatrics while a male may select orthopedic surgery – but that self-selectivity does not account for all pay disparity.

Nicak says that women should, in many cases, be compensated more than men in cases where women are more educated and better qualified than their male peers in the same job, which is a common occurrence. Male employees are rewarded with higher compensation when they have children, while females are penalized. Nicak suggested that one key way to improve wage parity is to advocate for paternity leave, indicating to society that both genders can take time off when a child is born.

Nationally, other resources are researching the dynamics of economic and pay equity. **The National Women's Law Center says that white women who work full time make 78 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts.** Intersectionality, defined as the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, creates overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. The intersectionality of economic and pay disparity reveals an even bleaker perspective when we evaluate wage disparities through the intersection of gender and race.

**Black women make 64 cents on the dollar, and Latina women make 56 cents on the dollar compared to a white man.** Education is not necessarily the great equalizer. As educational attainment increases, the gap between the actual hourly wage of men and women grows larger, doubling from high school to advanced degrees.

We interviewed Dr. Amy C. Lind, the Mary Ellen Heintz Professor and Department Head for the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Cincinnati. Dr. Lind says the intersectionality of gender and race is a critical issue for Greater Cincinnati, especially regarding economic and pay equity. She suggests that life is very different for black women in our region than it is for white women. Dr. Lind says the so-called feminization of poverty reveals that women who are poor, especially single mothers, are the poorest of the poor. The previously described Cliff Effect further exacerbates the challenges of poverty, which is racialized in segregated cities like Cincinnati, where more African Americans are living in poverty versus white people, relative to the total population of the community.

Collectively, this dynamic of pay inequity presents a hidden impact on several fronts:

- Women are carrying more debt than their male counterparts.
- Women do not have the opportunity to create as much wealth, including buying homes and saving for retirement.
- Women experience pay inequity early in their careers and spend the rest of their professional ascent struggling to overcome that inequity. While they receive raises and bonus compensation, their male peers do too, at greater levels.
- Women face setbacks for taking maternity leave or exiting the workforce to provide childcare.

- Women have fewer resources to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, with investors and other financial backers revealing gender bias when meeting female business owners.
- Pay inequity is present in female-dominated professions like teaching and nursing, but it is also widespread in corporate America – including law firms, banks, and even the CEO suite.

## **II. Findings from Community Feedback – No One Wants to Publicly Discuss This**

Our subcommittee's interviews with community members revealed several findings that were disheartening, disappointing, and discouraging. In addition to the UC Economics Center and Women's Studies experts referenced above, our subcommittee conducted interviews with women in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors; almost every woman across both sectors acknowledged she, or someone close to her, had directly experienced the impact of gender-based economic and pay disparity. Our sources revealed that the implications of pay disparities reach far beyond the paycheck.

**Many interview subjects mentioned they were concerned about discussing this publicly for fear of being labeled a troublemaker or facing professional retribution. Some of our sources involve local CEOs, senior executives, and civic leaders who want to remain private about their experiences; we are keeping our sources anonymous out of respect for their privacy and confidentiality.**

- One source working in the insurance industry revealed a \$25,000 pay gap between herself and a male co-worker. Another woman working in the non-profit sector discovered a \$13,000 pay gap between herself and a male coworker who had less experience and served in a junior position. Both women mentioned the implications these pay gaps will have regarding their retirement.
- One of our members interviewed the president of a local human resources organization who said she could not remember any training her organization had provided its members related to pay equity. She acknowledged this is an issue, but stated it is difficult for companies to address because “the size of the organization matters.” Pay disparity seems to be the issue that no one wants to talk about because, if it is recognized as a problem at the organizational level, there may be a resulting pressure to address the problem.
- We talked to a female professor who says the wage gap is still very much an issue within academic circles, even after publicized cases of professors discovering pay disparities. This professor says the “Old Boys” network is still alive and well at colleges in Greater Cincinnati with male professors socializing exclusively and making decisions that professionally exclude female peers.

- We talked to another professional in academics who revealed that in the 1960s and 1970s, men working at the university were given stipends for cigarettes as part of their compensation. This female professional asked university administration officials for an equivalent stipend to save for retirement but was denied this benefit. And while interviewing for a position with the university, officials said she was only being considered for the role because they could offer her a lower compensation as a woman.

### III. Our Recommendations

Our subcommittee explored a variety of recommendations intended on accomplishing three goals:

- How might we improve employers' understanding of pay disparity in Hamilton County and inspire action?
- How might we get female-focused organizations to commit to "walking the walk" within their own organizations, eliminating pay disparity?
- How might we eliminate the pay disparity for all women?
  - 78 cents per dollar for white women
  - 64 cents per dollar for black women
  - 56 cents per dollar for Latina women

In using these goals to guide our strategic direction, we explored initiatives related to policy, programs, publicity campaigns, and community engagement. We divided these strategies into a continuum of simpler initiatives called "The Walk," and more complicated initiatives called "The Hike." We are confident that while these efforts are challenging, they offer even greater potential for pay equity for every female in Hamilton County. We offer the recommendations below with the sincere belief that these strategies combined can be a catalyst for real change in improving the lives of every woman and girl in our community.

#### **Recommendation**

4. Our community would benefit from a public relations campaign to highlight positive stories from employers who adopt gender-based pay equity practices. This could take the form of a partnership with private businesses and nonprofits or as an initiative of an advocacy group or chamber of commerce.

As previously described in this report, our subcommittee discovered that economic and pay equity is an issue that few people want to discuss – whether those people involve women who have directly experienced disparity, or they are HR professionals or other



corporate leaders who are hesitant to acknowledge the dynamic out of concerns they would be obligated to begin addressing it.

We suggest that a strategy focused on raising awareness would help bring this issue to light and introduce it to the broader community conversation. This suggestion intends to improve understanding about this issue and begin to inspire action within corporate circles and publicly recognize companies who are already making strides to eradicate pay disparity.

Our group believes this strategy would best be championed by a community partner like the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber of Commerce or another public-private partnership.

### **Recommendation**

- 3.** Hamilton County should create incentives for businesses to adopt compensation practices that help eliminate pay disparities. The County could incentivize this behavior through the tax incentive packages developed by the Hamilton County Development Corporation to attract and retain businesses, or through developing purchasing policies to incentivize county contractors.

Our subcommittee acknowledges that some employers may initially demonstrate hesitation to address any gender-based economic and pay disparities at work within their professional footprint. With that acknowledgement, we suggest a nominal tax incentive that would assist employers in instituting financial initiatives that create parity between similarly educated, experienced, and qualified male and female employees.

We recommend that this tax incentive could either be offered by Hamilton County through the Hamilton County Development Corporation, the City of Cincinnati – the municipality in our region with the highest concentration of jobs, or the 48 other political jurisdictions within Hamilton County.

We also suggest that employers cease asking prospective employees about their prior compensation levels. When an employer asks a female candidate about their compensation history, the employer relies on data reflecting pay disparities to formulate their own proposed compensation level. This practice preserves the pay disparity a female candidate has experience and has the potential to compound that disparity. Rather than inquiring about prior compensation levels, employers should establish pay scales for open positions independently and based on the requirements of the role and the qualifications of a prospective candidate.

Our group proposes that this recommendation could be executed via two different strategies: Hamilton County could incentivize companies conducting business with the County to adopt this practice; or home rule political jurisdiction, like the City of Cincinnati could legislate this practice.



Our subcommittee also suggests that employers demonstrate more transparency about compensation and benefits for open positions. This is already a best practice that is already demonstrated by organizations within the public sector, including municipalities, universities, and organizations receiving public funds. We believe that the County and its affiliates could also compel companies to demonstrate compensation transparency to conduct business within Hamilton County.

The "Cash Queens" subcommittee appreciates the opportunity to serve all citizens of Hamilton County, but we are especially honored to champion initiatives that intend to improve the quality of life for women and girls who live and work here. We thank every source who spent time supporting our research and are especially grateful for their transparency and candor regarding their personal journeys as women experiencing economic and pay disparities. We also thank the Hamilton County Commissioners for reviewing this report and supporting the Commission's work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Economic and Pay Equity Subcommittee

"The Cash Queens"

Katy Crossen, Woman Chair

Mia Huber, Girl Chair

Desiré Bennett

Terri Holden

Andrea Poling

## Women in Leadership Subcommittee

### “Women Helping Others Lead Effectively (W.H.O.L.E.)”

#### Final Recommendations & Report

##### I. Challenge

Across our community, there are broad discrepancies between males and females in leadership positions. This exists as early as the middle school years where girls begin to lose confidence and do not actively seek leadership roles.<sup>1</sup> This extends through adulthood and exists at the highest levels of business and civic engagement.

Many organizations and institutions are working to address this issue, and we applaud them. In our subcommittee, Women Helping Others Lead Effectively (W.H.O.L.E.), we set out to identify: (1) key barriers to women and girls engaging in leadership roles, and (2) areas that women and girls believe are not currently being addressed in our communities. After compiling our findings, we outline recommendations that would advance women and girls' leadership in Hamilton County.

Our findings indicate that challenges for females start early. From our initial interviews with stakeholders, including teenage girls and adults who work with adolescents, we learned that the critical period when girls retreat from leadership begins around the middle school years, and this sets the tone for the high school years and adulthood. Girls' not pursuing leadership stems from a lack of confidence, and a system that does not encourage girls' leadership. From our interviews, we heard stories of girls and boys being treated differently by teachers and coaches and a lack of female role models and mentors, which contributes to a decrease in confidence. It is critical to begin to address this challenge and bolster confidence early in life.

Women and girls' needs vary throughout different stages of life, and mentorship opportunities do not readily exist. While there are several respected initiatives across the community that address women's professional development and leadership, such as programs run by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, the YWCA Greater Cincinnati, and the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, we did not identify any large-scale program focused on multi-age, direct female-to-female mentorship.

In addition to identifying the challenge of girls and women in leadership roles from a community perspective, we also examined this issue within County government, in particular on government-appointed boards and commissions. Currently, women comprise 52% of the population in Hamilton County, but hold only 30% of County board and commission seats.<sup>2</sup> Further, 35% of County boards and commissions have no female representation at all.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Student and Teacher Interviews, Walnut Hills High School (2018).

<sup>2</sup> *Appointed Board and Commission List*, Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation (2018).

<sup>3</sup> This represents County appointees to the board only (if the County had 2 or more designated “seats”). Full board lists were not available for all boards.



Research shows that having women and increased diversity in groups and on boards matters. Diverse boards and groups function better and achieve greater financial performance than non-diverse groups. In addition, organizations with increased board diversity have a better overall reputation and increased engagement and diversity within the organization.<sup>4</sup>

Although diverse leadership is important, women do not always raise their hands. They are less likely to seek leadership positions than men. When considering civic engagement, women believe they are missing the knowledge and expertise to serve, do not feel like they understand the process, and are less confident in their ability to lead.<sup>5</sup>

Civic boards should reflect the populations they serve. Hamilton County is a diverse community, and it is important that this be reflected in our civic leadership. A lack of confidence, few role models and mentors, and fewer women seeking leadership roles are just a few barriers to female leadership, which begins in girls' early development and continues through adulthood. We must be intentional to make change.

## **II. Community Input**

Our interviews and conversations with the community confirmed and supplemented our findings in Section I. We interviewed several teenage girls, two high school teachers, a young woman at the beginning of her career, several non-profit organization executives, and a corporate executive. Additionally, we collected feedback from participants of the community listening session in July.

From our students and teachers, we heard repeatedly that confidence building is critical. One teacher observed that, in her experience, when a girl demonstrates strong leadership skills in a group, it actually spreads and inspires increased leadership from other girls in the group.

When considering mentorship, our stakeholders noted that having mentors closer in age and experience is important. They indicated that this strengthens the relationship and makes the mentor more relatable. In addition, it is important to our stakeholders that there be strong role models to look up to. We heard this feedback from both girls and women.

From the community impact session, we heard validating stories from others. Several people shared their stories, stated they agreed with our findings, and provided support with ideas, suggestions, and willingness to help further this effort.

At the forefront of our thinking about this issue is the desire to not duplicate existing programs or initiatives. We seek to identify an unmet need within the current landscape,

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<sup>4</sup> PULSE Briefing: Gender Diversity on Boards and Commissions, Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation (2018).

<sup>5</sup> Women's Foundation / University of Kansas Study (2014).

and work within existing systems to address it collaboratively. To this end, we recommend partnering with organizations already working to mentor girls and young women, such as the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, local school districts, and local leadership development programs, as well as our Commission colleagues in the Spring Squad. We also recommend partnering with the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, which is working to address women's leadership on civic boards and commissions.

### III. **Recommendations**

Based on our research and community input, we have developed the following recommendations.

#### **Recommendation**

2. Hamilton County should create formalized policies to increase the number of women serving on boards and commissions, which can be replicated by other jurisdictions.

We recommend that Hamilton County, including the Administration and elected leadership, as well as the 49 independent political jurisdictions within the County, develop formalized policies of inclusive practices designed to increase the number of women serving on civic boards and commissions.

Our policy recommendations include:

1. Formalize a partnership with *Appointed*, an initiative of the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, to increase the pool of female candidates on civic boards and commissions.
2. Update and streamline the current appointment process, including developing a centralized board website with clear board descriptions, position requirements, board member expectations, time commitments and vacancies; creating a simple and straightforward application form and easy submission process; standardizing the interview process and questions; and publicly outlining the entire application process including key dates.
3. Develop a working group comprised of key County departments and outside partners, including the Women's Fund and Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls, to study and implement best practices for inclusive boards and commissions (e.g., standardized board orientation and training and providing child care during board meetings).

4. Educate the community, strategic partners and current and potential board members on the importance of diversity and inclusion.
5. Collect and track data on board and commission appointments.

**Recommendation**

6. Our community would benefit from a multi-age mentoring alliance, which includes peer-to-peer support, in order to build confidence in young girls during middle and high school.

We recommend that the Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls, together with County leadership and other strategic partners, work toward the development of a multi-age mentoring alliance, designed to provide a support system for girls and young women at critical transition periods between youth and adulthood.

This Multi-Age Mentoring Alliance (M.A.M.A.) should match girls and women with age-appropriate peer-to-peer mentors to help guide and support them through important life transitions. Two key transition points of focus are the middle school years (with high school mentors) and young adulthood/women entering the workforce (matched with mentors with 5-10 years of experience). This Alliance will foster a supportive environment for females and develop confidence by connecting girls and women with mentors who have had similar life experiences.

Some next steps to developing this alliance include convening existing youth mentoring organizations, schools and universities, and leadership organizations to develop the program framework, developing a marketing and communication strategy, and educating the community on the importance of confidence-building and mentorship. Finally, we recommend that this work be led by our Commission colleagues in the Spring Squad.

Respectfully Submitted,

Women Helping Others Lead Effectively (W.H.O.L.E.) Subcommittee  
Holly Hankinson, Woman Chair  
Ashlin Lindsey, Girl Chair  
Maria Piombo  
Mohogany Wooten  
Grace Haucke  
Julie Calvert

## Safety Subcommittee

### “S.A.F.E”

## Final Recommendations & Report

### I. Challenge

Through discussion as a committee and further research of experts in the community, it was determined that violence against women and girls, including sexual assault, date rape, domestic violence and other gender based incidents has increased so dramatically that law enforcement and special services, such as Women Helping Women, cannot meet the demand.

Our committee sees this trend of gender-based violence to be unacceptable. Violence against girls and their mothers leaves lasting, lifelong scars. Our research and community discussions centered around changing the narrative by intervening early in life with the male population. Teaching men “healthy masculinity” from an early age can circumvent the trend toward violence against women later in life.

Additionally, providing an online platform for all safety-related resources, segmented by age of potential victims, will aid those already in a violent situation.

### II. Community Input

We conducted extensive primary and secondary research, including interviewing more than a dozen community experts (full list below) and conducting a feedback survey of community members. Common themes across our research included:

1. Demand for services is at an all-time high
2. Focus on prevention - the subcommittee’s primary focus should be prevention (vs. intervention), especially with younger men who need more education and role models for “healthy masculinity.” To prioritize prevention efforts, it was suggested to focus on young men and women who have had adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and who are in our most marginalized populations. “Whole family” solutions also work well.
3. If the county also wants to address intervention, it should focus on:
  - a) “Stricter consequences for abusers,” “stop releasing children to violent parents,” and “honoring restraining orders”
  - b) Educating judges and law enforcement about intimate partner violence
  - c) Providing more jail space for offenders
  - d) Expanding the DVERT program
  - e) Ensuring we maintain sufficient rape kit testing resources



## **Full Research Findings**

### Introduction

The Subcommittee on the Safety of Women and Girls conducted research and interviews with representatives from organizations in Hamilton County for insight into the causes, scope and nature of violence against women and girls in Hamilton County. The root cause of gender-based violence is a gender-power imbalance perpetuated in all levels of society (L. Michau, J. Horn, A. Bank, M. Dutt, C. Zimmerman. 2015).

### Interviews

Our group identified Women Helping Women as a stakeholder and fundamental partner for our recommendations. Women Helping Women (WHW) focuses on crisis intervention and prevention advocacy on three areas of gender-based violence: sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. Kristin Shrimplin, President and CEO of WHW, emphasized the need to “significantly” and “systemically” invest money and policy toward prevention, especially given the rising demand for intervention. According to their 2017 annual report, their sexual assault responses rose 40 percent and therapy services more than doubled. They served nearly 11,300 clients including nearly 6,000 survivors. Shrimplin said that they are constantly looking for revenue: “Donor dollars and grant dollars aren’t necessarily [enough].” She said that although intervention seems like the more urgent need to donors and policymakers, “we will always be putting out fires when there is severe disparity of prevention dollars compared to intervention dollars.” Shrimplin estimated this disparity at almost one million for intervention and \$150,000 for prevention.

Shrimplin specifically recommended more funding for WHW’s school education program on dating violence and sexual violence “to empower more middle school and high school youth.” WHW is the primary source of gender-based violence education in the region by serving 4,358 students in 30 schools through their Prevent and Empower Program.

Representatives from the YWCA identified needs in criminal justice system reform, education, and trauma-informed care standards for all victims, especially children who are likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence. Advocacy Manager Desiré Bennett suggested Intimate Partner Violence Judicial Training for judges to understand the victim’s point of view and a partnership with the Ohio Justice & Policy Center’s Justice for Incarcerated Battered Women’s Project, which aims to get women clemency and parole. Bennett also recommended a focus on girls and women of color and lower income families. Erica Yingling, director of Domestic Violence Non-Residential Services and Detective Stephanie Bellamah of the Cincinnati Police Department both emphasized finding ways to break the cycle of violence through education, empowerment, and systemic reforms. Bellamah stated that the lack of space in jail and

lack of probation consequences continue the cycle of violence and discourage victims. Both Bellamah and Shrimplin identified the Domestic Violence Enhancement Response Team as an excellent program that connects the network of organizations protecting women.

Janice Clay from Bethany House and Kimberly Freeman, a Counselor in the Great Oaks School District, similarly emphasized lack of housing as a barrier to female employment and empowerment. Freeman answered that the single most important thing that can be done to prevent violence against women is to empower women with resources so that they can feel supported without a man.

Our subcommittee also interviewed the Honorable Heather Russell, Hamilton County Municipal Court Judge, who similarly pointed to influences in youth as a factor, asserting that a lack of a family unit and role models at home and at school as a primary factor for gender based violence. At CHANGE court, a rehabilitation program for victims of sex trafficking, Russell said that all the victims she sees have “a history of abuse or an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), such as family poverty or homelessness that began at a very young age.” Russell said that women who grow up where abuse is common may develop a low self-esteem and victim mindset, which often leaves them vulnerable to further victimization. Russell says that when a child repeatedly witnesses domestic violence, he or she may learn to repeat the behavior as a batterer or victim. Russell said that “unchecked mental illness” in a child is also a risk factor, especially when the child has no responsible adult to advocate for them.

Russell recommended addressing Hamilton County's lack of jail space by aiming to incarcerate violent offenders, even for a short time, to deter violent crime. She also recommended that more treatment facilities could help violent offenders change their behavior.

Russell said that our response to gender-based violence requires “no tax dollars,” rather for more people to take advantage of the existing network of resources. Heather Russell says she would like to see foster families, “big brother groups,” and nuclear families act as healthy role models and mentor “at-risk children” in school and/or at home. Russell's emphasis on the family unit shifted our focus to a holistic response that strives to include family, teachers, and all community members.

### **Research Survey**

Our Feedback Survey received 18 responses from people who attended our presentation in July. All agreed that prevention should be our primary focus over intervention.

When asked “If Hamilton County had enough funds to support this project, what do you believe the funds should be used for?” the most common answer was more education

and outreach. Some specified outreach to high schools, and education around “healthy relationships” and “sexual harassment.” One response specified a program that targets boys and two more specified young women. One response offered something new: to consider local hospitals as a starting point as another option to provide education and programming. As a response to a question about who to look to as leaders in Hamilton County, the most common answers were Women Helping Women, Denise Driehaus, female police officers, and other women focused groups such as the YMCA and Girl Scouts.

When asked what legislation Hamilton County should pass to support this project, 12 people responded. The most common answer was to enforce stricter consequences for abusers, stop releasing children to violent parents, and to honor restraining orders. On the other end, one response proposed to decriminalize sex work. One response proposed constructing more lighting on streets, sidewalks, rapid response for domestic violence in a way that is victim-centered, training for courts about victim-centered processes. One response proposed a focus on women's health and another questioned the way we question/interact with survivors from a legal standpoint.

When asked about expanding WHW's “Healthy Masculinity Curriculum,” 15 of 16 responses resounded approval. We received suggestions to also focus on standards for masculinity within racial groups, have the program taught by men and women, and to ask if the Boy Scouts have a similar curriculum.

### **Primary Research Interviews:**

Kristin Shrimplin, President, Women Helping Women of SW Ohio  
Desiré Bennett, Advocacy Manager, YWCA  
Erika Yingling, Director- Domestic Violence Non-residential Services, YWCA  
Detective Stephanie Bellamah, Domestic Violence Investigator, Cincinnati Police Department  
Dr. Lakshmi Sammarco, Hamilton County Coroner  
Kimberly Freeman, Diamond Oaks  
Honorable Heather Russell, Hamilton County Municipal Court Judge  
Janice Clay, Bethany House  
Diamond Oaks Womankind Student Group

## Secondary Research Resources:

- [Jewish Family Services, Domestic Violence Prevention Education and Support](#)
- [Ohio Domestic Violence Network](#)
- [YWCA, Family Violence Prevention](#)
- [Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence](#)
- L. Michau, J. Horn, A. Bank, M. Dutt, C. Zimmerman. 2015. "Prevention of violence against women and girls: lessons from practice."  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673614617979?via%3DiHub>
- Ohio Department of Education
- [https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime)
- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/oprah-winfrey-treating-childhood-trauma/>
- <https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/service/m/mayerson-center/about>
- <https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/hamilton-county/cincinnati/new-program-changing-how-cincinnati-police-respond-to-calls-of-domestic-violence>
- <http://www.health-genderviolence.org/guidance-for-health-care-professionals-in-strengthening-health-system-responses-to-gender-based-vi-0>
- <http://wvxu.org/post/hamilton-county-now-has-new-technology-help-domestic-violence-victims#stream/0>
- Women Helping Women
  - [Prevent and Empower](#)
  - [Coaching Boys into Men](#)
    - [Tools](#)
    - [Webinar](#)



### III. **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation**

1. Hamilton County should devote a standalone portion of the County Website for the Commission on Women & Girls. This will include updates on the work of the Commission, and information about existing programs offered by Hamilton County and area nonprofits. The website will contain women's stories of empowerment. The website will also include informational resources and connections to volunteer opportunities to support women's safety and empowerment.

Based on the responses we received from community member during the July Women and Girls Community Event, the Women and Girls Safety Subcommittee recommends a website/repository of information for those wanting to learn more about women's safety and a "Healthy Masculinity" curriculum for children in Hamilton County. We believe that a website that compiles information about healthy relationships, how to talk to children about relationships, and where to turn to for help and resources is needed in Hamilton County. We hope that this website could be a collaboration between the agencies that currently exist, like Women Helping Women, the YWCA, and Planned Parenthood, among others, to bring together information so that citizens have a place to look to educate themselves and help others. After the website is created, we want to work with local community centers, libraries, and businesses to spread the word about this resource.

#### **Recommendation**

5. Because prevention is essential to increasing safety for women and girls in the long term, area schools and community organizations would benefit by implementing healthy masculinity curricula.
8. In researching prevention programs, the Commission found that there are several curricula available for high schools, but could not find specific healthy masculinity curricula available for younger children. Early intervention is key, and so the Commission should continue to search for health masculinity programs for younger children, and pursue a partnership to develop one if none exist.

We also believe that we need to educate our children, especially boys and young men, about safe relationships. To do so, we recommend creating or adopting a curriculum about "healthy masculinity" throughout the county. The healthy masculinity curriculum is best started at a younger age where it can take root and start to influence the younger generations. This curriculum would teach young men and boys about how to be male leaders and make positive change in society. This would include teaching about being strong without being violent, standing up for the abused, and challenging

stereotypes, especially those associated with being male. Once a curriculum is chosen, we want to partner with county organizations, such as schools, libraries, and recreation centers, to incorporate this curriculum into their course offerings. One strategy is to identify someone within a school that finds this topic to be important for their students and have them take this project under their wing. In order to make Hamilton County safe for all people, including women and girls, we know that we need to provide resources and education to those living here.

Respectfully Submitted,

Safety Subcommittee  
Anne Bangert, Woman Chair  
Camille Williams, Girl Chair  
Eisha Armstrong  
Nancy Aichholz  
Emily Gilbride  
Annah Saladonis

## Holistic Support Subcommittee

### “The Spring Squad”

### Final Recommendations and Report

#### I. Challenge

Women are so much busier today than ever before. Many are torn between managing careers, families, and households. The women and girls we interviewed talked about the stressful struggle to find work/life balance and how this stress had the tendency to increase, especially during periods of transition. Even if these transitions were presumably positive life changes—like a new baby or a work promotion—we saw that a person’s excitement could often be diminished by such a change in their typical routine. The stress, if not managed well, can have several negative ramifications on one’s mental health, relationships, and various responsibilities. One member in our group talked about her sister and the pressure she felt to be perfect as she transitioned from high school to college. She coped with this life transition— which was overwhelming and exciting at once— by creating a personal sense of control that she discovered in an eating disorder. This problem was further exacerbated by social pressure online and among new peers where she felt she had to attain perfection. We had other interviewees talk about periods of transitions such as getting a divorce or retiring, where they felt alone and unsure of the direction their life was going. As a result, their transitions became even harder.

One of the ways to manage the stress in the healthiest manner is to be surrounded by friends, family, or other people who have gone through, or are currently going through, a similar hardship. When we spoke to the women and girls we interviewed, many could tell us a story of a stressful period of time and how having a supportive person or a kind of “personal cheerleader” helped them cope with a transition and achieve better results. Many women shared that support can come from things as simple as a lunch, text, or email. Overall, we found that the best remedy was having someone who could “cheerlead them along.”

#### II. Community Input

We interviewed a cross-section of women and girls. Our goal was to get representation from women who work a job, mothers who do not work outside the home, or women who have retired. We also targeted getting feedback from diverse communities and income ranges.

We found that the power in feeling supported was more universal than we originally thought. Most women described their ideal form of support as a personal “cheerleader” that can make them feel good about their progress and challenges them to be the best person they can be. Many women talked about their family, friends, co-workers, and teachers that provided this support and mentorship. A key aspect of the support was consistency; many women described wanting support that they would receive daily or weekly.

We asked the women we interviewed if there were periods of time when they needed support the most. We learned that transitions were the hardest periods of time where they would have appreciated some extra help. They talked about having kids/being new moms, divorce or marital issues, loss of a family member, schooling, and retirement as being critical transitions.

Technology was also a common theme that arose. A number of the women and girls we interviewed talked about the fallacy of Facebook, and how engaging in social media could actually worsen poor mental health they were experiencing. Many women found themselves comparing their lives to those of their supposedly perfect peers, even though it is widely known that social media only portrays the parts of our life we want people to see. There was significant discussion that occurred on the benefit of a personal interaction and building meaningful, emotional relationships between people.

We did a review of offerings in the community, and there are different ways the community assembles to provide support. There are church groups (i.e. Crossroads), grief counseling groups, Big Brother/Big Sister, etc. that are in place that can help provide support for women and girls as they go through certain transitions. Very few of these groups though laser-focused on women and girls, or provide support specified to both our situation, and our gender identity.

### III. Recommendations

#### Recommendation

6. Our community would benefit from a multi-age mentoring alliance, which includes peer-to-peer support, in order to build confidence in young girls during middle and high school.

As we started to research ways to assist women and girls, we found the concept of “MasterMinds” and thought it would be an interesting approach to exercise the idea of having a “cheerleader” to aid transitions. A MasterMind is a group of people who meet regularly to push themselves towards their goals, hold each other accountable, and



tackle challenges together. This concept was originally created by Napoleon Hill in his book, "Think and Grow Rich," and it has been used by successful people throughout history including Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, and Thomas Edison.

Our group pulled together 5 focus areas where we thought we could focus our efforts and make a meaningful impact.

- 1) Working / Professional Women
- 2) Mothers and Single Mothers
- 3) Immigrant Women and Girls
- 4) Retiring Women
- 5) High School Girls

Our recommendation for 2019 is to implement a MasterMind Group for High School Students, with a focus on juniors and seniors. We prioritized this group for several reasons:

- 1) Impressionability: A young person's mind is easily shapeable – if we can stress the importance of developing consistent self-care and quality communication skills while a person is young, they can carry on these behaviors for the rest of their life.
- 2) Partners: Out of all the groups, we found this had the most connections for partnerships (e.g. schools). We also found that most schools did not have an organization like this in place either.
- 3) Longevity: Setting up support systems in schools would allow for an organization outside of the Commission to run the day-to-day workings of groups and provide the organizational structure for implementation.

Here is the concept:

- 1) Test a mastermind for high school girls in 2019 (juniors/seniors) to talk about the issues they face without the fear of judgement / bullying;
- 2) Help them as they near major transitions (college, trade, military) and equip them with emotional and real life practical skills;
- 3) Encourage them to "raise the bar" and become better versions of themselves;
- 4) Enable them to develop empathy, help each other disconnect from social media and build deep, meaningful emotional connections with each other; and
- 5) Reinforce "lift as we climb" mentality.

Here are the potential partners:

- 1) Public and private high schools;
- 2) School boards; and
- 3) Non-profits (i.e. YWCA, Women Writing for a Change, etc.).

We envision help as providing location/moderators to lead group discussions, identifying key questions/issues that should be addressed, and recruiting 2-3 people to “champion” the topics and ensure success.

Respectfully Submitted,

Holistic Support Subcommittee  
“The Spring Squad”  
Anne Megerle, Woman Chair  
Chandra Brown, Woman Chair  
Madelynn Nutter, Girl Chair  
Julie LeMaster  
Brenita Brooks  
Charlotte McVay

## Empowering Women's Voices Subcommittee

### "The Dissent Sisters"

## Final Recommendations & Report

### I. Challenge

Challenge: Nurturing women and girls' voices from the playground to the boardroom as the foundation to empowerment.

40 interviews were conducted with women, men, girls and boys around the issue of empowerment. We learned the following:

1. There are different areas of empowerment.
2. Ideas and practices around empowerment begin during youth.
3. A woman's empowerment is influenced by her other characteristics (race, sexuality, etc.).
4. Support is important to feel and be empowered – from women and girls, but also from men and boys

Although empowerment can be broken into several classifications, a common definition was that empowerment meant you were comfortable speaking up and that you were heard.

"I believe that empowerment means that you feel comfortable enough to share your opinion and thoughts without being dismissed or judged. I also think that your thoughts, ideas, and opinions are taken seriously and considered for full merit."

Empowerment is the foundational piece of nearly every women's issue – having a voice that is both acknowledged and heard in order to achieve: women's equal leadership, pay equity, safety and holistic health. Interviewees shared that their voice and empowerment began when they were young and were encouraged by parents, teacher, peers, etc. The intersectionality of other aspects of their identity play roles as well. We also learned much about empowerment by looking at examples of women experiencing disempowerment.

#### a) There are different areas of empowerment

**Actionable** - internal (how you feel), positional (what your job or station gives you), and being permitted to be empowered.

**Intersectionality** - It's not just limited to being a girl or a woman. Race, age, education, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, socio-economic class—it all plays a part.

**Ownership** - Men and women both have a role in women's empowerment - and disempowerment.

**Obtain & Retain** - Barriers are everywhere, but so are the areas of support. There are institutional and community programs and resources. Each of us has an influence, no matter our role or position.

**b) Ideas and practices around empowerment begin in the youth.**

An early theme that emerged was that ideas and practices around empowerment begin in the youth.

“Women (or men for that matter) who were not raised to think they could do anything they want to [are not empowered]. Even though my mom was a stay-at-home mom, she and my dad always told me that I could be whatever I wanted to be. They let me explore my neighborhood on my own, let me ride my bike everywhere, let me play sports, had me take music lessons, dance lessons, taught me how to fix things, bake. I was just exposed to a lot of different things and it was always reinforced that if I wanted something, I had to work for it. I never really thought about not being able to do something. It's only been recently that I recognized an experience as being one where I am not empowered and it has been tumultuous for me.”

**c) A woman's empowerment is influenced by her other characteristics (race, sexuality, etc.)**

“I think women that have challenges with feeling empowered are those that are not inspired as a child. Many of these women come from a low socio-economic background, have family drug use, or unstable housing.”

“There are a lot of women in minority races and sexualities that aren't as empowered as straight white women.”

**d) Support is important to feel and be empowered.**

As to how to address the issue, there were varied suggestions, but all centered around creating environments where girls are taught responsibility, are supported and are encouraged to participate and share. Women and men both play important roles in this development – whether as parents, educators, neighbors or volunteers.

During our interviews, children told us the following:

Q. How could you/we let girls know it's ok to have a voice/opinion?

A. I think they do, they are just too scared to speak up.

Q. What obstacles do you see girls face that boys don't face?

A. Gossip, telling lies about each other. Boys get along.

Q. What would help girls who don't speak up?

A. If other people spoke up for them maybe they would start speaking up too.



Adults echoed those thoughts:

"I think finding places to expose the young adults to positive environments that embrace differences is critical. Role playing how to handle situations that are not favorable is just as important. Mentoring young women to help them improve self-confidence and foster an environment of success."

"I think educating males on the "stereotypes" in society regarding assertiveness by the female population is critical. I do not think it would be the same education as ethnic differences, but it would be similar. The crucial point would be to present the facts and not make the situation personal; meaning you cannot have the appearance that a single person's behavior is being attacked."

"I think it is important to teach/preach personal responsibility, tolerance, empathy, compassion and that those things are important to our shared human experience."

"We need to be our own examples by lifting up other women. This is the heart of women's empowerment for me—women supporting women."

"Learning it at home and at a young age. Having examples of men who can expose them to that."

Our research and interviews led us to a common theme – support in childhood. Interviewees indicated empowerment of the voice was tied to childhood and the developmental years. Primarily, were girls permitted and encouraged to have a voice? Therefore, our team's first goal will focus on connecting volunteers and mentors to existing programs that serve young people. We will identify organizations, agencies and schools to share opportunities to get involved in encouraging and empowering our girls and boys to create generations of strong girls who find their voice on the playground and retain it into the boardroom.

## **II. Community Input**

"Individual minds have preconceived notions and myths that need to be unpacked to ensure a meaningful conversation. We need someone to set the table and invite people to it."

Our team interviewed 40 women, men, girls and boys who were diverse in terms of age, race/ethnicity, LGBT, marital status, socio economic status and education level.<sup>6</sup>

Not counting schools, we identified 27 organizations throughout Hamilton County that offer services that would overlap with our initiative of working to strengthen girls' voices. Partnering with these organizations is key to maximizing effort and preventing redundancies.

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix DS1

### III. Recommendations

#### Recommendation

1. Hamilton County should devote a standalone portion of the County Website for the Commission on Women & Girls. This will include updates on the work of the Commission, and information about existing programs offered by Hamilton County and area nonprofits. The website will contain women's stories of empowerment. The website will also include informational resources and connections to volunteer opportunities to support women's safety and empowerment.

We recommend an initiative of the Board of County Commissioners facilitating community partnerships where we can connect volunteers with resources and with organizations for meaningful work to support girls, and a campaign to encourage volunteers and finding spaces to encourage conversations about empowerment.

#### Recommendation

7. The Commission on Women and Girls should continue to assemble informational resources to assist and empower women in the workforce, which can be shared on the Commission's website.

Additionally, with support from the Board of County Commissioners, we recommend that the Commission on Women & Girls work on an initiative to recognize individuals and organizations that exemplify women's/girls' empowerment and create a toolbox to empower women in the workforce.

Respectfully Submitted,

Empowering Women's Voices Subcommittee

"The Dissent Sisters"

Eileen Trauth, Woman Chair

Jai'la Nored, Woman Chair

Claire Wagner, Girl Chair

Sheryl Long

Jackie O'Connell

## APPENDIX DS1

### Dissent Sisters Interview Demographics

People interviewed: 40

#### Gender

Women: 24  
Men: 2  
Girls: 6  
Boys: 8

#### Race/Ethnicity

White: 28  
Black: 8  
Asia-Pacific: 1  
Mixed race: 3

#### Age

Children (under 18): 14  
20s: 4  
30s: 8  
40s: 7  
50s: 5  
60s: 2

#### Socio-economic

Highest Education  
Graduate school: 8  
College/equivalent: 13  
High School: 6  
Student: 14

#### Social Class

Professional/upper middle class: 9  
Middle class: 20  
Lower middle class: 4

#### Marital Status

Married: 15  
Divorced: 2  
Single: 21

#### Sexual Orientation

Straight: 35  
LGBT: 3





