

**Systemic Barriers Limit Opportunities for NYC Women of Color and Immigrant Women in Their Prime Years, According to a New Study Commissioned by The New York Women's Foundation**

***Housing and Childcare Costs Are Most Crucial Factors Inhibiting Progress, Finds the "Blueprint for Investing in Women Age 25 – 59"***

New York, November 8, 2018 – New York City women—particularly those of color and who are immigrants—are hindered in what should be their prime years by challenges and barriers that limit their prospects and keep them in poverty, finds a new report commissioned by The New York Women's Foundation.

According to the [Blueprint for Investing in Women Age 25 – 59](#), prepared by Susan Leicher of Thompson & Columbus, Inc., in New York City, women of color and immigrant women aged 25-59 bear the main brunt of responsibility for both raising and providing for their own families; for furnishing the labor force that undergirds the economy; and for leading the efforts that sustain their communities.

Across New York State, the rate of workforce participation for women with children under the age of six is 81% for black women and 64% for Latina women—and only 50% for white women. Yet despite exceptionally high rates of workforce participation, women of color and immigrants are largely barred from enjoying economic security, safety, and health due to exploitative wages and untenable working conditions. They lack access to the basic tools of wellbeing that other New Yorkers take for granted and are disproportionately exposed to violence from a range of sources.

The report draws on data obtained from academic and policy research and from interviews with a cross-section of public sector philanthropic experts, with leaders of grass-roots community organizations and with constituents of those organizations. It finds that women of color and immigrant women in New York City aged 25-59 face ingrained barriers and threats that:

- Mire them in jobs that fail to pay a living wage and offer few viable paths for advancement;
- Put them at uniquely high risk for intimate partner, sexual, bias-based and state-sanctioned violence;
- Deny them basic tools of health, including reproductive health, and well-supported parenthood; and
- Keep them underrepresented at the tables at which the policies that are shaping their lives are set.

Compounding the core economic tolls created by inequitable wages, two main factors overwhelmingly contribute to the high rates of poverty experienced by so many women of color and immigrant women and their families: the lack of affordable housing and inadequate child care resources.

“Every expert consulted for *Blueprint for Investing in Women Age 25 – 59* eventually made the point that for New York City's low-income women in this age group to make real progress, there must be a concerted and coordinated effort by the government, nonprofit and philanthropic

sectors to use their resources to expand access to affordable housing and reliable child care,” said Ana Oliveira, President & CEO of The New York Women’s Foundation.

In addition to calling for collaborative, accelerated actions to expand access to affordable permanent housing and high-quality child care, the report includes other recommendations for dismantling the obstacles that women of color and immigrant women face.

The report recommends that government further the creation and enforcement of legislative remedies that support economic protections such as family leave, equal pay and fair overtime pay; funding of key supports including job training, legal assistance, and emergency refuge; creating and implementing systems to better identify and prosecute sexual assault and rape in the workplace; and forthrightly identify, monitor and combat institutionalized harassment and violence against women of color, immigrant women and LGBTQI individuals.

The report calls on the nonprofit sector to continue its advocacy and provide programs and services that promote economic self-sufficiency; meet the needs of survivors of gender and racial violence; offer all New Yorkers a full range of reproductive services; and expand their constituents’ collective clout, leadership skills and alliances.

In addition, the report recommends that the philanthropic sector in New York actively support and prioritize those organizations addressing the concerns of women of color and immigrant women through multi-funder efforts designed to promote unified new infusions of resources.

This new report is part of The New York Women’s Foundation’s *Voices from the Field* series comprising four reports that explore the position, needs, and strategies for supporting the security and contributions of low-income NYC women during one of four major developmental periods (i.e., ages 0-8, 9-24, 25-59, and 60+). Its goals are to broaden understanding of the key roles and issues of New York City’s low-income girls and women; stimulate broad, productive discussion of how best to support those roles and address those issues; and catalyze bold investment into promising strategies and solutions.

If you’d like learn more about this report and the challenges of women aged 25-59, please visit [here](#) to stream a presentation of the findings and panel discussion with leaders of women-centered organizations working on the issues raised in the report.

#### [About The New York Women’s Foundation](#)

Since 1987, The New York Women’s Foundation has advanced a dynamic philanthropic strategy based on the fundamental reality that, when women thrive, their families and communities also thrive. The Foundation’s grantmaking places it at the top of public women’s foundations in the United States, and in the top two in the world. We invest in women-led, community-based solutions that promote the economic security, safety, and health of the most vulnerable women in New York City. We foster women’s leadership, create partnerships that spark catalytic change, exchange insights with experts across sectors, and empower women by training them in activism and philanthropy to accelerate and sustain forward progress. Visit <http://www.nywf.org> to learn more about our work to transform lives, families, and communities – and create a better New York City for all.

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